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# LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

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NOVEMBER 1896.

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## *A Boyar of the Terrible.*

A ROMANCE OF THE COURT OF IVAN THE CRUEL,  
FIRST TSAR OF RUSSIA.

BY FRED. WHISHAW,  
AUTHOR OF 'OUT OF DOORS IN TSARLAND,' ETC.

### CHAPTER XXII.

YERMAK.

FORTUNE favoured us on this weary and painful night. Determined to reach what we calculated would be a safe distance from our pursuers, we wandered together through the dark pines, Vera supporting me—for I was weak with loss of blood and in much pain—and by the merest accident (if indeed there be such a thing as accident in this God-ruled world!), by the merest accident we came upon the tiny hut of a woodcutter, frightening the proprietor almost to death by suddenly breaking in upon his rest, and here we passed the remainder of the night in comparative comfort and at least under shelter.

In the morning, feeling unfit to undertake a journey in my present stiff and feeble condition, I determined to stay where I was and hope for the best—the best being that our enemies would not find us here, for I was not up to much fighting, or, indeed, exertion of any kind.

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Then we posted our woodman, who proved to be an excellent and intelligent ally. (Michael was his name. May the Lord bestow upon him a heavenly Kingdom!) We posted this Michael high up in the branches of a tall pine-tree, with instructions to loudly sing a verse of the song known as the 'Kamarinsky Moujik' in case he should see a search-party approach. His position up in the tree would cause no suspicion, since he could justify it by pretending to be busy hewing off the branches preparatory to felling the tree itself.

Michael suggested that in case of danger we should conceal ourselves in his *lyédnik*, or ice-cellar—a convenience which even the peasant in his hut contrives to provide himself withal in this land of much ice and hot summers. In order to be ready for emergency we inspected this ice-cellar, which good Michael used as a store place for his milk and provisions. It consisted of a pit dug in the earth and filled with blocks of ice. A foot or two above the surface of the ice, and level with that of the outer earth, was a wooden floor having a trapdoor by which to gain access to the ice beneath; and covering the pit and its deck or floor of wood was a conical roof.

If our enemies should come upon our hiding-place, I not being in fighting condition, we would, we agreed, take refuge upon the ice beneath the flooring—a nice cool place in this hot weather, as Vera remarked, though somewhat cramped in area.

It was well that we had devised this retreat, and still better that trusty Michael was all alert and awake in his lofty perch among the branches; for about midday, as we were discussing a plain but welcome repast of black bread, with milk from the woodman's lean cow, Michael suddenly burst into song, and the familiar strains of the 'Kamarinsky Moujik' warned us that there was good and particular reason for his vocal exertions.

Quickly Vera and I crept to the *lyédnik*, which lay some thirty yards from the hut, and she assisted me to squeeze my stiff body through the trapdoor, she following immediately; then—leaving the trapdoor open—we lay on the ice slabs and listened.

First we heard a conversation between Michael and the stranger or strangers—there were two of them, we found—and Michael proved to us that he was no exception to the rule of his tribe, the Moujiks of Russia, who are, I admit it (though myself their countryman), the glibbest and the most facile liars that the sun shines upon. He had not seen, he said, any boyar, male or female, wounded or unwounded; boyars never came his way, and he should probably run away if ever one were to appear.

Nevertheless the two men approached the hut, in order to receive personal confirmation of Michael's statement, and we gathered from their conversation as they drew near that the nerves of both were somewhat shaken by the events of the previous night.

'Ha!' one said, 'a hut and an ice-cellar; take the cellar, Piotr, while I inspect the hut.'

'What if he suddenly pounces out upon us?' said the other.

'Tut, man, don't be a coward; he won't be here. If I thought he was, I wouldn't do what I am going to do—stick my head in at the door.'

'What would you do, then?' asked the other.

'On my soul, I don't know!' said the first, 'go home, I think, and say nothing about it; my heart is like wax after last night!'

'Shall we inspect together for safety?'

'No, no, nonsense—they are not here, or that peasant would be standing lying at the door, or asking us secretly for blood-money. Go and put your nose into the cellar; it is a mere form.'

So Piotr came to our sanctuary and looked in. Then he bravely lay down and put his face over the aperture, trying to peer into the darkness below. This was our opportunity.

'Take his hair and pull, Vera,' I said aloud, at the same time employing my more capable arm and hand to grip the fellow by the coat and pull him towards us. Vera obeyed instantly, and together we drew the fellow down to our icy refuge. He gave a fearful shriek of terror, and I heard his companion take to his heels and run; and then, almost immediately, there followed the noise of a scuffle and of a fall. Meanwhile Vera, with my help—the fellow making no resistance—tied our prisoner's hands and feet with the waist-sash of my kaftan, and in a minute or two we had him safe and sound.

Then, leaving him to cool himself upon the ice, we came up into the air; and here the first thing we saw was friend Michael standing over the prostrate form of the second of our opponents.

'Is he dead, Michael?' I asked.

'He is dead, mercifulness,' said the man, proudly; 'with my axe I slew him. He should have gone free, but that he slashed at me with his sword and called me liar; for this he died.'

It was just as well for us, however, that the world was poorer by this rogue; for if he had escaped, his tongue would have wagged, and perhaps we should have suffered for it. Now we were safe for the present, and might rest here in peace and security till

to-morrow. By that time, possibly, I might feel capable of continuing the retreat.

And in truth, when the morrow came, I did feel greatly refreshed and invigorated, and determined to lose no more time, but make an effort to push onwards towards home.

Our faithful Michael was therefore sent back to the house of the old boyar, at which we had lodged and fought, and where we had left our horses, with instructions to make careful investigations as to the strength of the party still remaining effective against us. If all had disappeared, he was to demand of the boyar our horses, and, if he pleased, use force or strategy to obtain them.

A few hours later, Michael returned with the horses, having found none but the boyar himself and a few wounded persons at home; the rest were, he was informed, absent in the forest, looking for certain misdemeanants for whose capture a reward was offered. Had he seen them?

'Oh, no,' the woodman had replied, 'certainly not; not a trace of the miscreants.'

'Well,' the old boyar had said, if he should come across them, he might bang the male offender on the head with his axe, and bring the female back to the mansion, when he would receive a handsome sum for his pains, as well as the gratitude of the Tsar and of the boyar himself, whose house they had filled with blood.

Then that wily woodman announced that he had prepared a supply of cut faggots which the boyar might have at a cheap price if he liked. The old miser mentioned a price for the wood, to which Michael demurred, but eventually a bargain was effected, and then Michael played his trump card.

'Your mercifulness,' he said, 'will lend me two horses and a cart to bring in the stuff? The stables are too full already, I see; and some of the horses of your mercifulness are tethered in the open yard.' These were ours and those of the Krilof party.

'But you are unknown to me,' said the boyar, 'and how can I tell that you will not make off with my horses, which are worth more than your wood?'

'Your mercifulness!' said Michael, reproachfully, 'do I look like a brigand?'

'You look like a fool,' said the boyar, 'but that means nothing!'

'Better that than a brigand!' said Michael; 'which horses may I use, then, mercifulness? and where is the cart?' Then the boyar evolved a good idea.

'See here,' he said, 'take the horses of the delinquents—they

are there in the yard—that brown one, and the yellow beside it—nice horses, too. See that you bring them back in good order; you may take any cart you please.’

The old boyar chuckled over his own ingenuity in thus saving himself the risk of lending his own animals; and our woodman, with the fool’s face and the fox’s brain (a most common combination among our Russian serf people), left the yard with our horses and with an excellent cart for our use. I made a mental note of the boyar’s kind dispositions with regard to myself, for future reference, and praised Michael for his service.

‘If we escape, Michael,’ I said, ‘you shall have our horses and the boyar’s cart also for your own, and a rouble in money besides!’ a promise which sent good Michael on his knees before his *ikon*, in most devout thanksgiving; after which we started once more upon our journey, heading for Glazovo, a place on the river Chepsa, which is a branch of the Viatka, and using the boyar’s cart, which we nearly filled with moss, in order that the jolting might spare as far as possible my wounded limbs. Michael acted as driver, and we took with us the prisoner whom we had deposited upon the ice in the woodman’s cellar. Michael was all for striking off the fellow’s head, but I would not agree to unnecessary bloodshed—an indulgence on my part which gained for me the profession of the prisoner’s gratitude, and his promise to tell no tales if, in returning, he happened to encounter those of his late associates who were still engaged in looking for us.

This man proved the sincerity of his professions, afterwards, in a remarkable manner. We set him at liberty ten miles farther on, when, with tears in his eyes, he renewed his vows and promises. But, as fortune would have it, he must have shortly after happened upon the search-party still abroad after us; for, before we had travelled many miles farther, we observed two or three horsemen following us, and behold! our grateful friend was with them, evidently acting as their guide, and seated in front of one of the party on horseback.

Apparently these good people had formed their own opinion—and that a flattering one—as to my prowess in fight, for though they must have known that I was wounded and stiff, and not in my best fighting condition, yet they did not venture to approach, but followed at a respectful distance, evidently determined to make no attack in daylight and in the open, but to watch their opportunity and to dog us until it should arise.

When we stopped and encamped for the night, they did the

same; so that it became necessary to set a watch and take our sleeping in turns, Vera insisting upon taking her watch with the rest. I felt by this time as though I could fight a little, at a pinch; and if only these good fellows would kindly follow us, as I told my princess, for a few days longer, I should be in a position to turn the pursuit in the opposite direction; unless, indeed, they would oblige me with a set-to, of which I cherished little hope.

I suppose our pursuers made sure that if they only kept us in view they were sure of their prey eventually, and desired to run no risk; hence we were not attacked during the night, nor yet during the whole of the following day, which we spent in jogging along as best we might over country roads and tracks towards the Chepsa, they following as before. How long this foolish pursuit might have lasted before I should have felt myself strong enough to end it, I cannot tell; for the end came unexpectedly, and in a manner which was as agreeable to myself as it must have been disagreeable to our pursuers.

We were nearing the Chepsa, and were but a few miles from the little town of Glazovo, when from out the heart of a dense birch-patch there suddenly sprang two or three wild-looking forms, who seized our reins and stopped the horses and were about to lay hands upon Michael and myself, when I caught sight of a face I knew among them, one of Yermak's men, and called to the fellow by name. At the sound of my voice, Yermak himself came out of the bushes.

'What, the young Boyar Stroganof, my sworn friend!' said he. 'Away, men, let go of the reins, Yashka! Now, what do you here, my son? What is the matter?—you are bound and plastered all over, and the sweet maiden of the Krilofs still with you, I perceive—then the Tsar has made a bad choice!'

I hastily told Yermak the latter part of our adventures, and how the Tsar had first despatched me and then sent to overtake me, and of my great fight on the stairs and of this foolish pursuit now in progress.

'What!' said Yermak, 'yonder horsemen that rode behind you? I took them for a portion of your own party. After them, men!'

And in this place it may be mentioned that half an hour or so later Yermak's men returned with three horses, but no prisoners, from which fact I deduced the worst fears for the fate of my late enemies; but for the sake of sparing Vera's feelings I asked no questions.

When we were safely quartered upon Yermak's galley—and familiar quarters were these to both Vera and myself—I gave Yermak a fuller description of all that had happened in consequence of the Tsar's choice of a bride, and of our escape and marriage, at all of which the chief looked grave.

'You cannot go to Perm,' he said; 'for the angry Tsar would hunt you down if he heard of your arrival there. You cannot go to Molebsk, for the Krilofs outdo the Tsar in their enmity towards you; he is at times friendly, as I understand it—but they never. Where did you intend to go to?'

'To Perm,' I said, 'which is my home.'

'It is impossible,' said Yermak; 'you must disappear, it is your only safety; I know of only one man in Russia who can both protect and conceal you.'

'I can protect myself,' said I, interrupting him hotly; 'let the Tsar send another party to take or slay me. Where is the last one?'

'Cut to pieces, I know,' said Yermak. 'You can protect yourself against the swords of the enemy as well as most, granted; but what of treachery?'

'It is true, Sasha,' said Vera; 'Perm would be dangerous to us, and Molebsk impossible.' I flushed angrily, for all this was true but humiliating.

'And who is the only personage able to protect those who are unable to protect themselves?' I asked, somewhat haughtily.

'Yermak!' said that individual.

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

### SIBERIAN PROJECTS.

THIS moment was, though I was not aware of it at the time, an exceedingly important crisis in my life.

'What thou, Yermak?' I cried, laughing scornfully; 'a Yermak protect a Stroganof? It is the wolf patronising the tiger.'

Yermak flushed a little. 'If it were not thou, but another, Stroganof,' he said, 'that spoke thus to Yermak—but this is foolishness, for thou it is and none other, the saviour of my child; we will not quarrel for foolish words. Now listen: for a while, at least, thou must stay with me, my son, for there is no other place for thee; the Tsar is the Tsar.'

'Yes,' I said, 'the Tsar is the Tsar, and a man is a man; as for me, I fear neither Tsar nor devil.'

'That may be,' said Yermak; 'and none here doubts it; but the Tsar's sword is longer than thine, Stroganof.'

'Yermak is right, my soul,' said Vera; 'we will bide where we are for a while, and thou shalt recover thy full strength before we brave the Tsar and his servants again!'

And bide we did with Yermak and his men, and right merry and happy we were; sailing or lazily floating day long and week long by river and lake; and hunting to our hearts' content on shore, when the desire possessed us to leave the galley for the dark green of the forest, or the pink heather and purple bilberry of the moors. It was a gay and delightful life, for was not my princess ever at my side, and the blue sky above my head, and the free air of the open country in my lungs? The circumstances were each and all the most favourable possible to my natural disposition—no wonder that I enjoyed life, in spite of the wrath of Tsars and the furiousness of Krilofs and other enemies!

As for Yermak, I became greatly attached to this wonderful man, and remained with him at his urgent entreaty until the following spring; wintering among his people on the shores of the Volga not far from its inflow into the Caspian Sea. We had many conversations as to my future plans, and made many projects of pioneering and adventure in various parts of the world. But Yermak's favourite project of all was a proposed expedition into the unknown country beyond the Urals. There was wealth beyond there, said Yermak, in minerals and rich soil, for any who chose to take it, sufficient to enrich a thousand Tsars, and land enough to provide an empire for each. Why should not we—he and I—cross the mountains and set the Russian flag waving on the banks of the great Siberian river? That would surely placate the wrath of my offended sovereign, for we should bring and lay at his feet a new crown.

'Yermak,' I cried, when first he broached in my hearing these imperial dreams of his, 'have you been studying the Stroganof prophecy?'

'Nay,' said he, 'I knew not that there existed such a prophecy!'

Whereupon I quoted to Yermak the words which have been quoted before, about the Stroganofs presenting 'the East' to the Tsar, and his joy thereat.

Yermak was deeply impressed with what I told him. He

pondered for many moments, and afterwards took me aside to speak seriously to me.

'Sasha,' he said, 'it may be that there is a great destiny before us; if there really exist this prophecy, then——'

'As to that,' I interrupted, laughing, 'go to Perm, and ask any one you please; every one knows it there!'

'Then,' continued Yermak, very serious and almost solemn, 'then, Sasha, I firmly believe that it is thou and I, and none others, who are destined to fulfil this prediction. It is a splendid destiny!'

'Certainly it is,' said I, still laughing, though somewhat impressed by Yermak's words and evident conviction; 'but one cannot conquer a continent with a couple of galleys full of brigands!'

'When there is work to do, God gives hands to do it!' said Yermak. Was Yermak also among the prophets? It would appear so.

When spring came and the rivers had rid themselves of their icy encumbrance, we shaped our course by streams and lakes for Perm; and right glad was I to behold my beloved Kama once more. No less delighted was Vera herself. We stood hand in hand upon the deck of our galley, as we sped slowly on towards our old home. We passed the spot where Yermak had first caught us, and where I had nearly but not quite succeeded in effecting her escape and mine one dark night, as has already been described; and we passed also the spot where, but three years or four years since, my wilful princess had ridden down to the shore and plunged her horse into the swollen Kama, rather than submit to be tamely captured by her boy-lover; and we laughed together over her escapade, and I told my princess that her laughter was foolish, because assuredly if she found herself in a like position, to this very day, she would do the same thing.

And Vera laughed the more, and said that she believed she would also.

Our object in coming to Perm was to see my uncle, in order to obtain his sanction, authority, and assistance in our projected enterprise beyond the Urals. We had ourselves conveyed in our galley up to the very town of Perm, to the great alarm and consternation of the peaceful inhabitants, who cherished a wholesome fear and regard for the renowned Yermak, whose name was a terror throughout this portion of the realm, where—though never cruel to his fellow-creatures, stern and unbending as he was to all

who resisted or offended him—he was well known to entertain views as to personal property which did not tally with those of the weaker proprietors. But when it was seen that I was with Yermak, and that my beautiful princess was also with us, the alarm gave way to curiosity; and I observed that the people had much to say to one another about us, as we passed, and that they whispered and wagged their heads knowingly, and occasionally crossed themselves, from all of which I inferred that a portion, at all events, of our story was known, and that these good folks, seeing me with the brigand Yermak, concluded that I was in appropriate company.

But my poor uncle and my brothers nearly expired with terror when they beheld me.

‘For the love of God, Sasha,’ said my uncle, with tears in his eyes, ‘go back whence you came, and hide yourself where you have been up to this time concealed, and for the love of God also tell me not where that place is. Do you not know that you are outlawed and accursed, and that there is a price upon your head?’

I laughed, and said that I was not aware of this interesting fact.

‘What have I done,’ I asked, ‘that I am outlawed?’

‘You have offended the Tsar,’ said my uncle, ‘though in what particular manner only rumour has described; but the Tsar is offended, and would rather have you dead than living, and the Tsar’s sword is long and sharp. Therefore, for pity’s sake, Sasha—son of my dead brother though you be, and the best, as I believe, of all the Stroganofs—go hence, for your own sake and also for ours, for the Tsar’s wrath will assuredly consume us also if we harbour and protect you!’

‘Be comforted, uncle,’ I said, ‘I shall not stay; but bless me first, and this princess, my wife, and then I will tell thee what I have in my mind.’

So my uncle blessed and embraced Vera and me, and in his own courtly way he told her that, though he was a Stroganof, and she a Krilof, her loveliness outweighed the enmity of generations, and he welcomed so beautiful a creature into the family as an acquisition. ‘For God’s sake, Sasha,’ he ended, ‘keep her safely from the eyes of the Tsar, and risk nothing for thyself, so that thou remain alive to protect her!’

‘As to that, uncle,’ said I, ‘fear nothing for me, and if I am not by to protect her, Vera can protect herself as well as most!’

From all of which I gathered that my uncle had heard rumours,

more or less founded upon fact, as to the relations between the Tsar and my princess. But when I informed him that the Tsar had actually bidden me marry Vera, warning me at the same time to ride away as fast as our horses could carry us, he was surprised indeed, which was only natural, seeing that he did not know the complex circumstances of the case and the bewildering double nature of the Tsar.

Afterwards I told my uncle of Yermak's project for enterprise beyond the Urals, and of his conviction—which Yermak presently confirmed—that the Stroganof prophecy was destined to find fulfilment at my hands and his. My uncle reflected long and deeply, being also greatly impressed with this idea, and presently gave as his opinion that it might very well be as we had concluded—or as Yermak had, for I as yet failed to realise myself as the long-foretold conqueror—but that if so, this could not happen at the present time, for such a great enterprise as the conquest of a continent would need much preparation and the collecting of a large force of soldiers. We might indeed now make a preliminary survey of the country in preparation for a future campaign, and indeed we could scarcely do anything wiser than betake ourselves beyond the Urals, pending the Tsar's return to a more friendly attitude towards myself.

'As for present assistance,' my good uncle said, we were rich, we Stroganofs, and, God knew, I was welcome to my share, though I did not contribute much to the wealth of the family! At this I laughed, and said that if I added Siberia to the Stroganof possessions, I should have done my share, whereupon Yermak looked preternaturally grave, and my uncle turned to the *ikon* and piously crossed himself.

'What God will give that He shall give!' he said reverently.

The result of all of which was that Yermak and I, with our wives and one of my brothers—who discerned, with his merchant's eye, great commercial possibilities in the enterprise, and came as a trader and nominal chief of the expedition, we others forming his escort—spent the whole of that summer exploring the territory beyond the great range of the Urals—trading, fighting occasionally, and making friends with the natives, and prospecting their country and rivers; and the more we saw of this land the better we liked it, and the more determined did Yermak and I become that one day we would make it our own, or gain it for the Tsar. This expedition had besides another excellent result; it made a man of my brother, who had up to this time been a mere trading animal, of a

worthy and harmless, but effeminate type. He now developed quite a love for hunting and the life of the open air; and many times, during fighting with the natives of the country, he displayed spirit and energy which no one, knowing him only at Perm and in the bazaars, would have supposed him to possess.

Thirdly, my beautiful princess had before the end of this summer presented me with a magnificent little son, of whom I may have more to say later on. Our married life had been one delightful dream of happiness, and it has ever been a cherished memory for me that my princess accompanied me upon that first expedition into Siberia, and saw with her own eyes the great empire which her lord and lover was destined, in future days, to conquer.

When we returned to Perm, just before the setting-in of winter, I found to my delight that, by the clemency of the Tsar, my master, the putting of a price upon my head had been withdrawn, so that I was now able to live in peace at the home of my fathers without fear of being murdered by some unscrupulous person anxious to touch the reward of so base an action. In my self-sufficiency I had never felt fear on my own account; but the relief which the new state of affairs afforded to my Vera's anxiety was so great that I could not forbear, in sympathy with her, to rejoice also.

I learned later that I had Adashef to thank for the Tsar's clemency; for that Ivan Vasilitch was now entirely under the control and benignant influence of the monk Sylvester and of Adashef; and that the Tsaritsa had quite won by this time the heart of her imperious young lord, who was now dominated by the trio mentioned, and was in process of being converted into a reformed character.

All this was pleasant hearing for me, and gave me hopes that the day might even yet dawn, and that soon, when my master and I should renew our old intimate and friendly relations. For though I had learned, at Vera's hands, that there are better things in this world than the favour of the Tsar, yet I sorely longed, at times, to be at peace with my master, for whom, in spite of everything, I cherished a peculiarly warm love, and an equally intense pity.

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

## AN INTERVIEW WITH THE TSAR.

IF I were to set down all my adventures from the point at which my record has now arrived up to the present time with as much detail as has been used in the description of my quarrel with my master and its causes and results, I should produce indeed a mass of manuscript, for my life has been from its beginning, or near it, to its end—counting this present time as the end, for the real end cannot now be far distant (and indeed the end of activity and the life of energy is, for me, the end of all things in so far as this life is worth the living)—one long term of adventure and incident. My late master, the Tsar Ivan, was a great letter-writer. His correspondence was ever the most voluminous, and I believe I must have learned from him, during our close intimacy of the last few years of his life, to love the exercise of setting quill to paper; for up to that time I never did much writing of any kind, though always a ‘grammatnui,’ as we call those who are able to read and write, being generally too busy with a more warlike implement than the pen to have time for the occupation which now, in the stiffness and feebleness of advancing years, I have learned to love; it is a good pastime for those who can do nothing better; I suppose for the reason that the next best thing to fighting or hunting, or living adventurously, is to speak or write of these matters.

Yermak took his leave of us after our return to Perm, having first solemnly promised to visit me at springtime once in every two years until such time as, in the wisdom of my uncle, it would be possible for us to undertake the campaign upon which, by this time, both we and he and even my brothers had set our hearts. But my uncle bade us practise patience, for, said he, there was no opportunity at present for such enterprise. If undertaken now, it would partake of the character of a mere piratical expedition, and would undoubtedly displease the Tsar, whose mind was not at present prepared for conquests in his name in the direction of Siberia.

‘Let us first prove to the Tsar the necessity of the undertaking, and our ability to carry it out,’ said my uncle, ‘and then let us set about it with his sanction; this may not be in my day, but the day will come that we Stroganofs shall set our foot upon the neck of the Siberian Tsar. I am sure of it; I see it in my dreams, nightly.’

Therefore the prospective Siberian campaign settled itself in our brains, and there remained a fixed and permanent guest for some twenty years.

Meanwhile, to deal first with my uncle's activity during that period, in order to make way for my own records, the Stroganofs during the next few years displayed the most astonishing energy. Their trade in dried fish and, especially, in salt of their own production and preparation, increased so enormously that several towns sprang up between Perm and the Urals as the direct product of their extended operations. These towns were peopled almost exclusively by persons employed by the Stroganofs to work the various new salt-digging and preparing establishments inaugurated by my energetic uncle and brothers. Each of these Stroganof towns was surrounded by a considerable wall to protect it from incursions by the wild and warlike tribes inhabiting the slopes of the Urals, and was moreover provided with a kind of garrison of fighting men, mostly Cossacks from the Don and 'birds of the Steppes,' as the wilder Cossack robbers from the district indicated were then called. In this manner, my wise and really great uncle prepared the way, very gradually, for the darling project of his heart, and by the time a score or so of years (from Ivan's accession) had passed, he had actually so far extended his influence and his commercial interests, that he had obtained permission from the Tsar to establish small forts and business centres on the eastern side of the Urals, as far as the river Tobol, a tributary of the Obi.

The Tsar, to his great honour be it said, did not allow his displeasure with myself (which, alas! burned like the lamp before an *ikon*, inextinguishable in his bosom!) to stand between the other members of my family and his favour. With that greatness of mind and breadth of vision which ever distinguished my imperial master, Ivan did not fail to observe the value of the work being done by the Stroganofs of Perm, and since my uncle never undertook the founding of a new city or any advance eastwards without first asking the sanction of the Tsar, and offering a fair tribute to the crown upon any profits he might make by the new enterprise, Ivan invariably gave his consent to such undertakings, generally couched in one of those long-winded but very complete and comprehensive letters in which his soul took delight.

So, then, my uncle and my brothers prepared the way for Yermak and for me. Meanwhile, I—restless spirit that I was, and partly because I was anxious to regain the favour of my offended master—threw myself with fervour into any and every

enterprise which seemed to savour of adventure, and to contain the opportunity for distinction.

I was at Kazan when that Mussulman city was taken by the armies of Ivan; the first great victory in Russia of Cross over Crescent. I may say, without boasting, that I was the very first Russian to enter the place after the walls had been breached by the exertions of our German engineers; it is in reality no boast to claim this distinction, because I achieved it by no merit of my own. I was one of those who swarmed over the breach, a dense mass of fighters, and was knocked on the head from behind by one of our own men, and sent tumbling into the streets of Kazan. Why my friend should have treated me so unceremoniously I am unable to say; probably he was desirous to be himself the first over the walls, and feared that my manifest energy would forestall him. At any rate, down I went unconscious, and my friends swarmed over me.

And unconscious I remained for some little while, to which fact I may attribute my escape from a very shocking spectacle—namely, the massacre of the Tartar population of Kazan by the Christians. So terribly complete was the slaughter, that the city of Kazan has never to this day recovered its Mussulman population to any considerable extent; and those few Tartars who still inhabit the place are to be found only in the suburbs.

The Tsar was present in person at the taking of Kazan; I had often seen him during the preliminary operations, but had avoided his observation, fearing lest the sight of me should anger him, and that I should be instructed to depart before the storming of the city. Adashef saw me once, but at my urgent entreaty he agreed to say nothing to the Tsar, who, he told me, never mentioned my name, and must, he feared, still be incensed against me.

‘And yet I am innocent of conscious offence, Adashef,’ I said.

Adashef laughed. ‘The Tsar is a most devoted husband to his wife, Sasha,’ he said; ‘I do not think he any longer covets another man’s goods.’

‘Yet he continues angered against those who are in possession of them!’ I said bitterly.

‘Who can read the Tsar’s mind?’ said Adashef; ‘not I, for one!’

Nevertheless I both saw and spoke to the Tsar at this time, and it happened in this wise.

I have said that I was knocked senseless into Kazan by some one from behind; and it so happened, luckily for me, that the

enemy were not at hand to finish the work done by my own side; for at our appearance at the breach they had fled very quickly away. In consequence, I was the only wounded man in this place, and I lay unconscious or but half-conscious, until I suddenly heard a very familiar voice in conversation with Kurbsky, the commander of our forces. It was the Tsar's voice, and my faculties seemed to return at the sound of it, though I could not exercise sufficient volition to open my eyes or to raise myself to my feet.

The troops were busy plundering and murdering, and the sound of their hellish proceedings reached my ears from a distance. The Tsar's voice sounded miles away also, though he and Kurbsky stood close to me upon the loose stones of the breach, for the Tsar was now entering the city for the first time, under Kurbsky's guidance. His voice, in the joy and triumph of the moment, sounded jubilant.

'Here is a dead soldier, Kurbsky,' he said, 'and from his appearance, a boyar; what does he here?'

'It is the body of him who was the first to enter the city,' said Kurbsky, 'as I am informed, and his name is one that should be familiar to thee, Ivan Vasilitch; he is Alexander Stroganof.'

'What!' said the Tsar, as though moved or amazed, 'Sasha Stroganof, and dead?'

I tried to open my eyes or to move, in order to show that I lived, but for the life of me I could not.

'It is certainly Stroganof,' said Kurbsky, 'and undoubtedly, I fear, dead; for see, he moves not, and does not seem to breathe.'

'God have mercy upon his soul, and Christ receive it,' said Ivan; 'and his wife a widow!' he added.

At this I made a second effort to sit up in order to show that my poor princess was not to mourn me yet awhile, but the result of the effort was a little sigh and nothing more.

'See, he moves!' said Kurbsky, 'he is not dead; our voices have roused him. Awake, Stroganof; it is the Tsar!'

'Nay, if he be alive,' said the Tsar, coldly, 'let him be; he will recover without our aid. Send him to me, Kurbsky, when he is fit for it; I would speak with him.'

Consequently, that night, as I lay weak and weary and sick, with the grievous head-blow I had received, Kurbsky came and bade me attend in the Tsar's pavilion on the following morning, and to the great tent of his Highness I dragged myself at the time appointed. I went with light heart, though with stiff and painful limbs, for I made sure that the Tsar would now forgive me, or

rather—since I had done nothing wrong—receive me back into that favour of which I had been so long unjustly deprived.

But the Tsar had no favour for me.

‘I have sent for thee, boyar, to bid thee return whence thou camest,’ he said; ‘see that thou depart before the sun sets a second time.’

‘Tsar Ivan Vasilitch!’ I said, bursting, I believe, into tears, in my weakness and my disappointment, ‘hast thou no measure or favour for me?’

‘None,’ said he, ‘there is no friendship between thee and me, Stroganof, nor can ever be; what thou hast done thou hast done knowing this, that in doing it there must be an end of all things between us.’

‘Is there never to be an end to thy wrath, Tsar?’ I said.

‘My wrath against thee is ended long since. There remains only the word of the Tsar; what I have said I have said and cannot alter. Didst thou not marry a wife?’

‘The Princess Vera is my wife,’ I said, ‘as she was my betrothed wife before thy *ookaz*, Tsar.’

‘Some there are who grudge neither treasure nor even life itself when the Tsar asks it of them. I asked a little thing of thee, Stroganof, and thou wouldest not!’

‘Is love a little thing,’ I said hotly, ‘which is more strong than life? Ask my treasure, my service, my very life of me, and I will give it to thee, Tsar, and that thou knowest.’

‘It is better to give what is asked of thee than to offer that which is not needed,’ said Ivan; ‘I asked of thee, not thy life’s love, but simple obedience to the word of the Tsar.’

‘The two years are past and gone now,’ I said, ‘and the Tsaritsa, whom God preserve, still lives and is in good health. I should have married Vera Krilof before now even though I had waited at thy bidding.’

‘It is true, and my own wife is a very angel from heaven,’ said Ivan, intensely; ‘but thou hast nevertheless put to scorn the word of the Tsar.’

‘Pardon, then, Ivan Vasilitch,’ I said.

‘No pardon, I say,’ he cried; ‘must the Tsar eat his words to please thee?’

I bowed and made as though to retire, for it was useless to prolong this conversation. But the Tsar called to me to stop, and said, speaking rapidly and flushing:

‘Tell thy wife that the Tsaritsa grows more beautiful each

day ; that she is a very angel from heaven, and that the Tsar loves her, as he loved her from the first, with all his soul. Tell her this.'

I did tell my princess what the Tsar said of the Tsaritsa, and Vera laughed and said : 'Tell the Tsar, when you see him, that my own man is as much a man as ever—not angelic altogether, but a good enough husband for a tiger-cat ; and that I love him, as I loved him from the first, with all my soul !' And then we both laughed ; and though I do not quite know what we laughed at, I believe Vera did.

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## CHAPTER XXV.

### AMONG THE ENGLISH.

THE next year and a half were spent by me in the quiet happiness of domestic life at Perm. I do not mean that I sat at home and courted my beautiful wife and played with the two little Stroganofs who had appeared since our union to fill our hearts with thankfulness and to modify the Amazonian spirit of my princess, who now settled down to maternal interests and duties with as beautiful a grace as she had ever displayed in the wild days of her girlhood. I did but little sitting at home ; that is not my department in life, as Nature fashioned me ; but I lived at Perm and hunted in the woods around, and loved my wife none the less because I was not for ever at her elbow. If I understand my princess—as I think I do—I am convinced that she would not have had it otherwise, for she well knew that a man must live his life as God intended him to live it, following the bent of his particular disposition. My princess would have wept to see me lose my passion for the life of the woods and my love for danger and adventure. Had I grown uxorious and a lover of indoor pleasures, I think Vera would have chased me forth into the forest, bidding me take my dogs and my knife and hunt, lest I developed into a sloth and a sluggard, and lost that manhood in me which had won for me her own heart.

So, then, I passed my time in hunting, leaving to my princess the responsibility of training the earliest glimmerings of understanding in our little ones, a task which who can perform more properly or more beautifully than a mother ? Occasionally Vera would find time to ride out with me, and her ecstasy on such fes-

tival days proved beyond doubt that my wife's youthful spirit was still alive and did but lie in abeyance in favour of the more engrossing duties of maternity.

But my own restless spirit tired, presently, of life at Perm, and I was glad when the time approached at which Yermak had appointed to meet me upon the Kama; for I longed to go afield and find adventure; I longed most of all for reconciliation with the Tsar, in order that I might take my proper place in his armies, which were to fight again and again during these years with the hosts of Islam, and to wrench the standard of the Crescent from the position it had usurped upon the fortresses and cities which belonged of right to the people of Holy Russia. But the Tsar, I knew, would have none of me at present.

Yermak came at the time appointed, and had proposals to make, which pleased me. The Cossack chief suggested an expedition up the Dwina river as far as the great northern sea; an enterprise which might possibly prove extremely profitable to him, and was sure to provide me with a sufficiency of that adventure for which my soul thirsted.

Accordingly I agreed to go with Yermak, taking my princess and her pair of babes with me, and journeying by river and lake, through the pleasant summer months, until we reached the monastery at the mouth of the Dwina known as the House of St. Michael,<sup>1</sup> where we met with a notable adventure.

Our galleys lay at anchor in the fine basin of the river, and beyond us glittered that wonderful sea upon which neither Vera nor I had ever set eyes up to this day, and of which, from my very first glance at it, I determined to know more before I should be greatly older.

We had not been at anchor in this place for many days, when, to our surprise, a large foreign ship came sailing in from sea, and Yermak was all for attacking the vessel with our galleys, a proposal to which I was unwilling to agree. Presently a large gun was fired from the ship, not, as I believe, with the intention of injuring us, but by way of some sort of signal or greeting; for, so far as I could see, there was no shot or cannon-ball: at any rate, none struck the water near us.

Presently, a portion of the crew of the vessel, together with the captain, who seemed a boyar of distinguished appearance, embarked in a small boat and came ashore, Yermak and I, together with an armed following, doing the same. We met on the shore and ex-

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Archangel.

changed peaceful salutations, the foreign boyar being a person of excellent manners and very courtly air.

He told us, through an interpreter (whom he had picked up on the coast of Norway, a Russian fisherman who had been cast ashore in that country, and had now found this means of returning to his native land), that they came from the country of the English King Edward, and had sailed with three vessels under the command of one Willoughby, who—with two of the ships—had gone to the bottom of the sea during a great storm of wind. Then this boyar, the lieutenant of the expedition, by name Chancellor,<sup>1</sup> had pushed on alone, being determined to investigate this great northern sea, the girdle of the world, which led, it was said, to the country of the Kitai Tsar,<sup>2</sup> and had found himself, at length, where he now was. What land was this? and who was our sovereign? and were we standing, Chancellor asked, under the North Pole?

We told Chancellor that he had come a long way, and that he now stood in the northern part of the empire of the Tsar of Moscow, Ivan Vasilitch.

‘Then,’ said Chancellor, ‘I will leave my ship and go pay my respects to this Tsar of yours, for I have letters to him from our English king, and many matters of great importance to discuss.’

But first the Tsar himself must be consulted as to what should be done with these foreigners, and there was a very long delay while messengers were sent to Moscow. During this time of waiting I made great friends with the English boyar, who learned a little of our language, and I some of his; and together we hunted, and fished the waters of the great sea, and went and came together as intimate friends. Chancellor was surprised at the loveliness of my princess, and asked me whether all Russian women were as beautiful as she, to which I replied that there was but one sun in the heavens, with many lesser stars; and on earth but one Vera.

Chancellor had somewhat to teach me in the art of sword-fencing, an art in which I was quick to learn, and not slow to outstrip my master: but in such matters as swimming, hunting, running,—as well as in strength of limb and hand, the Englishman—though active for his age, and no weakling, and as brave as any lion—was far below me.

When the answer came from the Tsar, it was evident that Ivan thought very greatly indeed of the arrival of the English ship, and desired to do the English boyar much honour, for he bade him

<sup>1</sup> Whom the Russian records call ‘Chensler.’

<sup>2</sup> China.

come directly to Moscow, and ordered far and wide that he be treated on his way with every respect and every consideration, as a great ambassador between princes. When I found that this was the bent of the Tsar's mind, I determined to accompany Chancellor to Moscow, as his discoverer, if one may make a vain boast and claim as a virtue what was in reality an accident; for I hoped that the Tsar would account it a good service to have brought this foreigner to his Court, and would smile upon me once again, especially as all agreed that no husband could be more devoted to his wife than was he, by this time, to his Romanof Tsaritsa.

This visit of Chancellor to Moscow was the first beginning of the Tsar's relations with England, with which country our wise Tsar—recognising its power and influence in the world, and the marvellous activity of its merchants and navigators—ever displayed the greatest desire to come into close and familiar intercourse.

Chancellor was received at the Tsar's dinner-table, where Ivan sent him the bread and salt, addressing him by his name, Richard Chancellor, and according to him the first portion of each dish; but Chancellor said no word until after the repast, having no right to speak, but only to bow (which he did with supreme grace) until invited to converse with the Tsar. The Tsar sat this day upon his Chair of State, which was so thickly inlaid with gems of a kind called 'turquoise,' ten thousand of which were used for the back of the chair alone, that not an atom of the silver or ivory of the throne<sup>1</sup> is visible, but only gems placed as close to one another as the stones that pave the roads here and there in the city of the English king.

The Tsar looked first surprised and then embarrassed and angry when he saw that I was among the companions of the English boyar; nevertheless he did not vent his displeasure upon me publicly, but sent me the bread and salt and my portion of the repast, though he spoke my name with frowning brow. Moreover, though I tarried in Moscow all the while that Chancellor himself remained, Ivan did not send me away; so that I began to hope his anger against me was gradually cooling down; and when at last I was blessed with an interview with my master, I found to my intense joy that this was indeed the case.

And yet, even now, the old fire of his wrath burst forth again, showing that it only smouldered and was far from being quenched; though I must admit, in justice to my master, that it was my own foolishness that awoke the slumbering flames.

<sup>1</sup> This throne may still be seen in the Kremlin.

I came face to face with the Tsar in the Church of Uspensky, where he leaned on the arm of Sylvester, that good and great man, who, with Adashef and the Tsaritsa, for upwards of ten years kept within bounds such passions as have rarely swelled in human breast before or since; for such were the passions of Ivan of Russia, the terrible Tsar.

He was not terrible on this day of the Uspensky. On the contrary, softened by the exercise of prayer and worship, Ivan actually smiled upon me as he met me, and, sending Sylvester away upon some pretext, took my own arm instead of the monk's.

'Thou hast done me a service in bringing to me this English merchant, Sasha,' he said; 'I will remember it to thy credit.'

'Alas! how many services must be added together to regain me thy favour, Tsar Ivan Vasilitch?' I said.

'Perhaps many, perhaps few; but this shall be reckoned the second, for I have not forgotten thee at Kazan; thou mayest yet regain thy place in the land, Stroganof, and in my heart; let us pray together before the *ikon* of St. Methodius.' Which we did, the Tsar praying longer than I and more devoutly. He was at this time an enthusiast in religion, and ever afterwards—even in his most savage and implacable fits of passion and cruelty—he never forgot the devout habits now acquired, but invariably prayed heartily for those who had suffered as his victims.

Afterwards the Tsar accompanied me through the streets, still leaning upon my arm, and asking me many questions—not one of which was about my beautiful Vera. Had I been aught but a thoughtless fool, I should have let well alone and said nothing also on that dangerous subject; but destiny having determined that I should play the part of a fool, I did so, and mentioned her name. The Tsar flushed and made a gesture of anger; I saw both, but made as though I had seen neither.

'Where, then, is the boyarinya Stroganof?' asked Ivan, after a pause.

'At the Stroganof mansion,' I said.

'At Perm?'

'In Moscow. I brought her with me.'

The Tsar stopped suddenly in his course and crossed himself, muttering something which I did not hear.

'Come,' he said, 'I will see this woman!' and taking my arm once more, he hurried me away towards the Stroganof house, walking much faster than we had walked before, but saying nothing. When we reached the mansion I glanced at the Tsar

and saw that he was very pale and even trembled a little, and that his lips seemed to be busy in prayer.

Vera had not expected to see the Tsar, and was somewhat disconcerted by his sudden arrival. She caught up the child she had been playing with, thus betraying that her first instinct on seeing the Tsar was fear, or distrust. Ivan noticed nothing of this, however; he fixed his hawk's eyes upon Vera's face and gazed intently upon her; the child cried.

This appeared to touch some chord which angered Ivan. He suddenly stamped and turned his back upon mother and infant, without having said so much as a word of greeting.

'Take her hence,' he said to me, looking quite livid with rage; 'I have married an angel from heaven; what have I to do with devils? Get thee behind me, Satan!' My spirit took fire at his words.

'My wife is no devil, Tsar,' I said boldly; 'the devil that vexes thee is within thy own bosom.' Ivan raised his staff, as though to strike me.

'Tsar Ivan,' said my princess, 'you dare not!'

The Tsar let his staff fall to the ground.

'No,' he said, 'I dare not; I am not as I was in the days of darkness; I am the servant of God. We will kneel together before the *ikon*!'

It was all I could do to retain my gravity under this sudden change. The Tsar was certainly an apt pupil of Sylvester, or the monk was a marvellous master. Nevertheless, we knelt with the Tsar before the *ikon*.

When our prayers were finished, he was calm, and addressing me, having averted his face from Vera, upon whom he did not bestow another look during the rest of the interview, he bade me, without further parley, escort Chancellor back to the Dwina, and accompany him to England.

'Take with thee thy wife,' he added, 'for it is ill for a man to separate himself from her to whom God has united him. Go, then, to this English king's country, and learn what thou canst of his people and trade, and all that concerns them; this I shall account a service from thee. Chancellor will depart to-morrow, and thou and she with him; now, farewell.' And with these words the Tsar left the room, without having glanced at or spoken to my princess.

And thus it came about that not only I, but also my beloved wife, accompanied Chancellor from Moscow, and leaving our little

ones with Yermak to be carefully brought to Perm, to be tended by our own people there, we took ship with the English boyar upon his great vessel, the *Edward Bonaventura*, and for the first time in our lives found ourselves, presently, out of sight of land, and plunging up and down upon the bosom of great waves in a manner that was, at the first, extremely unpleasant, causing a sensation of great discomfort and sickness.

The English Tsar Edward was dead when we arrived in his country, but the reigning Tsaritsa Mary was pleased to receive Chancellor with favour, and to extend her grace also to my princess and myself. Both she and the Tsar Philip, her husband, and all their Court were greatly surprised at the loveliness of my wife and at her skill in horsemanship, in which she far excelled all the English ladies who took part with her in the hunting of the deer and foxes, which is a favourite sport of the English people, though I found it very tame after my wolf-chasing and bear-spearing expeditions.

Chancellor returned to Russia after the winter was past, and we of course accompanied him. He bore with him the *ookaz* of the English Tsaritsa, by which was extended to Russian merchants the right to trade in English ports in return for the privileges granted by my master Ivan at the request of Chancellor to English merchants.

Right glad was my Vera to return in safety to Perm and to her babes, and indeed she had informed me during the journey that if God restored her this time in safety to her children, she would never again leave them, great as was her love for me; for the place of the mother was with her children, and if the father would wander he must wander alone, or the whole family must journey together. The helpless little ones must not, in any case, be left to strangers and serfs to be taken care of.

Hence when Chancellor returned once more to England, together with the first actual Russian ambassador, Osip Nepey, I bade farewell to my tenderly loved wife and children, and sailed with the Embassy for London, which is the Moscow of the English people. I have thanked God night and morning since that day that it was put into my mind to leave Vera and her babes safely at Perm on this second voyage, for a terrible storm sank two of our ships, drove a third upon the shore of Norway, and Chancellor, his son, Nepey and I, in the *Edward Bonaventura*, were cast ashore upon the coast of Scotland, where Chancellor and his son were drowned,

It was my good fortune to save the ambassador, Osip Nepey, from drowning with Chancellor. I was swimming to the shore when I caught sight of his agonised face among the breakers, and was just in time to give him that timely assistance which encouraged him at a desperate moment to continue struggling. Together we safely reached dry land, exhausted, but alive and thankful for our escape, and here we found a few others of the Russian Embassy, with some of the crew, a sadly reduced company, with whom we journeyed to London, meeting with much unkindness and rough treatment from the savage natives of the northern portion of the English sovereign's dominions.

But in London we had a great reception, being met, when still twelve miles away, by eighty of the principal merchants of that great city, all of whom were mounted on magnificent horses and wore heavy chains of gold. We were allowed to enter the city as though we were great generals returning in triumph from some glorious campaign, rather than poor shipwrecked adventurers, robbed of all we possessed, ragged and weary and travel-stained.

The King and Queen received us, the chief merchant or mayor harangued and entertained us, a guild of merchants, called 'The Drapers,' feasted us so well that not one of us but was sick and sorry on the morrow; and all with whom we came in contact vied in showing us kindness and honour.

On our return to Russia, I received a letter from the Tsar, a good and gracious letter, in which my master said that I had done well in saving his ambassador from drowning, and that he would remember this service to my credit.

'Thou knowest by this time,' he wrote, 'what things please and what displease me; thou knowest also where the tempter strikes when he would triumph over me. Is it a great thing that thou shouldst be on my side in this day of my repentance? Woe to thee if thou become to me an occasion for stumbling!'

I did not altogether comprehend this mystic communication; but when I asked Vera what she made of it, she laughed and said:

'It means, my soul, that when next you journey to Moscow, you are to leave me at home; and that the Tsar is still a man, even though, as he is so fond of boasting, he has married an angel from heaven!'

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

## THE STROGANOF DESTINY IS FULFILLED.

THERE came with us from England a certain merchant navigator, called Jenkinson, who was the finest Englishman I have met with. This man carried in his heart an enterprise which, when he revealed to me his intentions, delighted me beyond measure, and in which I then and there determined to take a share.

This was to descend the Volga to Astrakhan, cross the great inland sea called the Caspian, and journey with caravan and goods for barter to the far-away city of Bokhara. This journey we actually accomplished, though we most narrowly escaped massacre, and did, in fact, lose the greater part of our followers through the treachery of the heathens and savages of that country. But Jenkinson and I and a few others fought our way safely, with our camels and possessions, out of the ambush they had prepared for us, Jenkinson fighting like a lion, and I, if I may make such a boast, doing also, I think, my share, and so we returned in safety to our own side of the Caspian.

After this great enterprise I returned with Jenkinson to England, taking my family with me.

The great Tsaritsa Elizabeth was now the reigning sovereign in that country, and at her Court my wife and I were well treated, and learned to love the English people, and to admire them no less than love them, for their bold, adventurous spirit was that which above all other things attracted both Vera and myself, and among these hardy islanders we found plenty of it. Here I learned the art of the sword and became, as I have hinted, a master fencer. And here my boys learned many valuable lessons of self-control and endurance, boxing and battling with other children of their age and playing in various hardy English games unknown to our boys in Russia.

My Vera was, naturally, a favourite everywhere; but there was one lady of the Court, a relative of the Queen herself, by name Mary Hastings, who resembled my princess so greatly that the two were actually occasionally mistaken for one another.

Now it so happened that I had imparted to the English Tsaritsa as much as I considered warrantable, in discretion, of the events connected with my own Tsar's choice of a bride and of his undoubted fascination by my beautiful wife, whom I said I believed he would have chosen as Tsaritsa, but for my petition to

him, before the selection, to spare me my only hope of happiness, and perhaps also partly on account of Vera's unconcealed aversion for him.

'Why, then, cousin,' said the Queen to Mary Hastings, laughing, 'here is a chance for thee! Wilt thou be Tsaritsa of Russia? Thou and this Russian princess are like twin-sisters.'

Mary Hastings made a grimace; for, if the truth be told, my Vera had painted the Tsar in colours which did not present an attractive picture of my master.

'But the Tsar is no longer a bachelor, your Majesty,' said I; 'he was married to the Romanof Tsaritsa eleven years ago.'

'Keep thy eyes open, nevertheless, Mary,' said the Queen; 'Tsaritsas of Russia are not immortal, and if this one dies thou mayest yet sit upon a throne that is higher than mine!'

'From all I hear of him,' said Mary Hastings, grimacing once again, 'the husband you propose for me would play a pretty dog to my cat!'

'Or cat to thy mouse!' added the Queen; 'nevertheless, a crown is a crown, even though it sit heavy on the temples.'

I have set down this conversation because it has a bearing upon after events, to which I must presently refer.

We lived in England a year and more at this visit, and when we returned at length to our home in Russia we found sad news awaiting us.

The good Tsaritsa, Anastasia Romanovna, was dead! The Tsar, mad with grief and rage, had quarrelled with Adashef and Sylvester, his right hand and his left, and had chased both these good men from his presence.

Deprived of their influence and of their counsels, and of the soothing, controlling sympathy of his wife, my poor master was lost indeed. He embarked forthwith into quarrels of every kind—with his people and his boyars, as well as with foreign powers. He engaged simultaneously in two warlike enterprises, the one against Islam, represented by the Khan of the Crimea; the other against the Livonian Order, who were assisted by the Poles. For a short while things went well with the Russian hosts, but presently a run of ill-luck set in, and with it a renewal of the ungovernable, savage phase of my poor master's temper. I cannot set down the atrocities which he committed at this time during his quarrels with the boyars and people of his realm; but I may mention that there was a list of nearly 3,500 victims to his passion to be seen in a synodical letter from the Tsar to the

Monastery of St. Cyril, in which document the prayers of the Church were asked for the soul of each of these persons.

I make no excuse for the Tsar, excepting such as I have already put forward at the beginning of these records. His passion, when indulged to the full, amounted to insanity; and I prefer to think of my dead master as, during those years of terror, scarcely answerable for his actions. Feeling himself to be so completely dominated by his passion, at this time, that he could not hope to exercise a patient and equitable sway over his people, the Tsar abdicated (in 1564); but the boyars—knowing that if the government were left to themselves, the bad would become infinitely worse—prevailed upon him to reconsider his decision, with the result that Ivan entered upon a veritable reign of bloodshed, and visited upon the boyars their offence in compelling an insane man to govern them against his will, by ruthlessly slaughtering both them and their families.

Also, knowing that he had now many enemies within the realm, the Tsar corresponded with the English Queen Elizabeth, entreating at her hands a safe asylum within her country in case it should be necessary for him at any time to suddenly flee his own, and offering her equivalent privileges of sanctuary in Russia, if she should quarrel with her own subjects. But the Queen, knowing her popularity with her people, gladly agreed to give this conscience-stricken Tsar asylum, while repudiating a corresponding privilege for herself as entirely unnecessary.

Meanwhile the struggle with Livonia continued, and our Russian troops were once more, for a while, successful, so that the power of the Order was crushed and broken, and the fortresses of the Baltic coast were one by one captured by our armies. In all these fights, I, Alexander Stroganof, took my share, and was sometimes in the favour of the Tsar, and sometimes out of it. But by reason of these other more important occupations, I saw less of Yermak during these years, and was obliged on more than one occasion to miss my two-yearly appointment with him.

It was while Ivan's armies were absent upon these Livonian wars that a dreadful calamity happened to the nation. The Crimean Khan Devlet Gherei suddenly appeared before Moscow, burned the great city to the ground, and carried away one hundred thousand captives of all classes of the people.

Though, in the following year, our general, Vorotinsky, exacted a terrible vengeance upon this Mussulman and his armies, yet matters from this time onward went all awry for my master. His

candidature for the throne of Poland was repudiated with scorn, and the French Duke of Anjou, brother of the King of France, was chosen instead. Our armies began to suffer defeat in the Baltic provinces—everything went wrong with the Tsar: it was as though the curse of an evil destiny were upon him. Above all, of those matters which especially angered the Tsar at this time, my master was unsuccessful also in a different kind of enterprise. The new Russian ambassador to England, Pisemsky, in an interview with the Tsar, happened to mention the fact that at the Court of her English Majesty was one who was known as the twin-sister of the boyarina Stroganof.

‘Wherefore?’ asked the Tsar, frowning angrily; for even now, after twenty years and more, he could not bear the mention of my beautiful Vera’s name, and in my rare interviews with him I never dared to speak of my domestic affairs.

‘Because,’ said Pisemsky, ‘the English lady and the Stroganof boyarina are marvellously alike, as every one who sees them together cannot fail to observe.’

‘Is this English princess, then, beautiful?’ asked the Tsar, musingly.

‘Lovely as the day,’ said the other; ‘to be like the Stroganova she must be that.’

When the Tsar heard this he lost little time, but sent an ambassador straight to the English Queen, proposing an alliance between himself and her cousin, Mary Hastings.

But Mary Hastings would none of him. In this she was like her ‘twin-sister,’ my Vera, that she had no ambition to be the Tsaritsa of Russia, but preferred rather to move in a less glorious sphere, so, only, that she might have her share of domestic happiness and the peace of private life.

This so greatly enraged my master, the Tsar, that the whole fabric of commercial relations so happily and laboriously built up between Russia and England was in great danger of collapsing entirely; and the terrible Tsar became more and more terrible to his boyars and his people.

But the indulgence of his own savage spirit could not mend for Ivan the fortunes of his realm, and gradually the Tsar lost his hold upon all his acquired possessions in Livonia. Batory, the successor to the French King of Poland, who did not stay long away from France—Batory, with the aid of Swedes and Hungarian mercenaries, made so fierce an onslaught upon certain Russian towns that there was danger of the dismemberment of the empire,

and a disastrous peace was made, by which Ivan lost all that he had formerly acquired, and more also.

It was just at this crisis, that one day as I sat with my ever-honoured and beloved wife and my grown boys at home in Perm, my uncle being by this time a very aged man, though my brothers were still active—as we sat together at supper the door was suddenly and violently pushed open, and in rushed Yermak in a state of alarm and agitation.

He had been hunted, he said, by the Tsar's troops, from the Volga to the Kama, and had with difficulty made his way to Perm. He was an outlaw at this time, and in dire disgrace with the angry Tsar, whom he had offended by levying tribute from certain towns which, having paid Yermak, were therefore unable to pay the Tsar also.

'Yermak,' I said, 'come! we will go across the Urals and conquer Siberia for our poor Tsar: who knows! it may be that the time has come to fulfil our prophetic destiny! The Tsar has certainly lost many of his western possessions, it is time that we took the East in our hands and laid it at his feet!' I spoke jestingly, for the prophecy had been so long delayed, and matters had gone so hard with the Tsar and all that was his, that I had no real hope of the realisation of our old dreams about Siberia.

But Yermak took the matter very seriously indeed.

'Hide me and my men in one of your salt towns for a while,' he said, 'and as the heavens are above us, Sasha, we will go forth together and do this great thing!' I laughed, but gave Yermak the sanctuary he sought; and, hidden safely in our little fortified town of Chernogor on the slope of the Urals, that great captain (for he has proved himself this) collected a force of eight hundred and fifty men, consisting of his own people and ours; and with these troops under our two selves, Ivan Koltso, Nikita Pan, and one or two other leaders, badly armed, badly provisioned, more of a rabble than an army, we crossed the great range, and entered at once upon that series of conquests which ended in a marvellously short space of time in the subjugation of all the tribes between the Kama and the Obi. I use the expression 'short space of time' in its comparative meaning; we were indeed nearly three years in accomplishing the work we had to do, and alas! we lost our great leader, Yermak, who was drowned while crossing a swollen river, before he had enjoyed the opportunity of reaping the fruits of his stupendous services in the forgiveness and gratitude of the Tsar.

As for me, my dear master took me from this moment entirely

into his favour. In that new crown of Siberia was forgotten all that had served to sever our friendship and to keep us, for so many sad years, apart one from the other. With the conquest of Siberia, too, began a new and brighter epoch for the poor harassed Tsar; and the day which saw Ivan Koltso and myself and one or two of our best men bring to the Tsar and lay at his feet, as it were, the keys of a new empire, was the first of many happy, peaceful days, harbingers of the quiet and peaceful end of the stormy life of Ivan Vasilitch.

The only allusion he ever made to my beloved wife after our full reconciliation was on the day of his death, when he said to me, some little while before the fatal fit seized him—

‘In truth, my Stroganof, I think there is only one boyar in my realm towards whom I have frequently if not consistently behaved well, and that is one whom I was the most sorely tempted to treat ill. Dost thou know who this is?’

‘Alexander Stroganof,’ I replied, believing that it was I he meant, though there might be those who thought otherwise as to his treatment of me.

‘It is so, indeed,’ he said; and added, ‘I am old now, Sasha, and thou too; we are grey though we have both been young in our day; but young or old I have never loved a woman save once.’

‘The Tsaritsa Anastasia,’ I said weakly, for I spoke her name without conviction, and only because I durst not say another.

‘As a saint,’ said Ivan, ‘yes; as a woman, no! Art thou indeed ignorant, Sasha?’

‘Alas! Tsar Ivan, if this be indeed so, as thou sayest,’ I cried, my eyes full of tears, ‘how was it I was not struck dead, as thou hast struck not one but many of those who have offended thee? Why was I spared?’

‘Not for thy own sake, Sasha,’ said the Tsar, smiling, ‘though now I rejoice that thou wert man enough to escape out of my hand when my passion outran my generosity.’

Nevertheless the Tsar never asked to see Vera again, and it so happened that he suddenly died on this very day, while playing at chess.

And so perished the greatest of all Russians up to the present time; for both great and terrible was Ivan Grosnui, terrible to all with whom he came in contact; yet I personally, in spite of many periods of deep vexation of spirit because of him and his violence, I personally have learned to see in my dear but dread master much that was most lovable and truly noble.

Even Vera, my ever faithful and loving and ever beautiful wife, believes, since I reported to her the Tsar's last conversation with me, that there was more heroism in Ivan Vasilitch than she had thought heretofore.

'He spoke the truth, my soul,' said she; 'he has treated us well according to his lights. God give him a heavenly kingdom!'

And to this prayer I say fervently every day of my life, 'Amen!'

THE END.

## *Under the Willows.*

WE twisted the chain of our punt round a projecting angle of bare root this morning, and lay by for lunch beneath the spreading shade of a big beech tree—*patula sub tegmine fagi*. The sky was painted a brilliant ultramarine, with wisps of flake white just forming and dissolving upon it. Swallows skimmed the calm surface of the river, in long low curves, turning now and again to show the metallic steel-blue of their burnished backs, or the lighter plumage of their downy breasts, as they rose on the wing after just touching the water. We sat among the mirrored trees and ate our potted meats very silently. By-and-by a small woodpecker, arrayed in a coat of many colours, iridescent in sheen, crept round the bole of the beech, and began running briskly up and down the trunk, as is his wont, picking insects with quick darts as he went from the crannies of the bark, or the angles between the stem and the ivy that encircled it. The rapidity of his movements, and the certainty of his foothold on the smooth perpendicular surface, delighted us as it always does. Shortly after, again, a water-vole stole out from his tunnel in the bank, close to the spot where we had fastened our chain, and began to nibble noiselessly at a crust of bread which we had happened to throw landward. Every now and again, for no particular reason that we could discover, a momentary panic overcame him, and he glided ghost-like back to his hole, without moving a blade of grass as he passed through the mimic thicket. But after a minute's pause we could see the inquisitive little brown snout protruded once more, soon followed by two keen eyes and a smooth furred body. Next instant our friend was back at the tempting feast, nibbling for all he was worth, and casting furtive eyes towards the pair of big intruders who had brought so much wealth with them to his hungry neighbourhood.

It was a typical riverside scene. The Quarry Woods sloped down to the Thames on one side; on the other lay an eyot, fringed with rush on the water's edge, and rising steep above into

dense masses of white hemlock and purple loosestrife. On a Sunday, when Thames blossoms with blazers and summer frocks, you would have seen little or none of this native wild life; the water-voles and the coots retire, abashed, from that orgy of town hubbub let suddenly loose upon them. But this was a Wednesday; and the wild things had recovered from their Sabbath terror—no Sabbath to them, but a recurrent invasion of uncouth beasts from landward. A kingfisher hovered hawk-like over the stream for a while—a rare habit of his kind—then darted with unerring aim on the small roach he had marked for himself. A moorhen steered close to us with her unseen paddles, and, when we moved to observe, dived abruptly under the punt. Blue dragon-flies flashed in the sunlight and vanished. But most conspicuous of all things in the riverside setting were the pollard willows. Not beautiful in themselves, people tell me; I hardly know. I accept them as symbols of Oxford and the boating life; they are so bound up in association with the joys of the river and undergraduate days that I cannot really say whether I love them for themselves, or for the memories they enfold for me.

‘And yet,’ I thought, ‘I have never made a magazine article out of willow trees!’ For it occurred to me as I looked that there was really a great deal to be said about them.

Willows, indeed, are not all alike. There are willows and willows. And I may add in passing, of no great group are the species more hopelessly difficult to discriminate. Their identification forms the despair of the beginner in botany. For this many reasons exist. To begin with, the species themselves are really ill-marked in nature; they have not distinctly and decidedly demarcated themselves one from another. Many intermediate forms occur in wild specimens, and many of the species produce natural hybrids with one another. Most unscientific critics generally object to the theory of evolution that ‘we never light upon the missing links.’ That is only because such observers have a limited and imperfect acquaintance with nature; they know that a horse is always a horse, and a cow a cow; and they are not familiar with the shadowy borderland where (if I may be allowed to carry out my analogy) cows glide imperceptibly into zebus or buffaloes, and buffaloes into antelopes. As a matter of fact, among plants in particular, many families exist in which the real difficulty consists in discovering any sure and distinct lines of separation. Each kind merges into each by imperceptible gradations. Hardly any two botanists are agreed, for

instance, as to how many species should be recognised among our English epilobes and our English St. John's worts; while as to wild roses, Dr. Babington's *Manual* makes no less than seventeen distinct types, which Mr. Bentham, in his *British Flora*, reduces to only five, and I myself would still further bring down to three. The common blackberry is split up by Babington into forty species; Sir Joseph Hooker lumps it into six, which in my humble opinion is five too many. And so again with the willows. Hooker distinguishes thirty-eight species; Babington thirty-one; and Bentham fifteen. After this, nobody need complain of the lack of 'links,' of intermediate varieties, or of the absence of that gentle gliding of one kind into another which some people (erroneously) regard as a necessary result of organic evolution.

But besides this general vagueness and variability of the willows, which are much given to individuality and idiosyncratic tricks, and besides their frequent habit of forming intermarriages with other species of their own family, thus producing natural hybrids, there are yet other causes which make the species of willows most difficult of identification. In the first place, the shape and character of the leaves in one and the same species vary immensely from individual to individual; and they also vary in the same tree from time to time, the old foliage being often quite different from the young specimens. Furthermore, in the second place, the willows have the habit (to which I will recur later) of producing their male and female flowers upon separate trees; and the male and female trees of the same species are sometimes very little alike in growth and frondage, so that it has only been possible by most careful observation to determine which male belongs to which female, and *vice versa*. This singular variation in the leaves, coupled with the bizarre difficulty in matching male and female specimens, has produced, says Bentham, 'a multiplication of supposed species, and a confusion in their distinction, beyond all precedent.' All which facts I mention here, partly from their general interest as a corrective of that hasty and superficial view of nature which regards it all as neatly parcelled out into distinct and well-recognised kinds; and partly in order to assure you that in this paper I shall trouble you as little as possible with such minute and uncertain questions of identity. What I have to tell you will mostly be true of all willows alike, whatever their kind; so far as I allude to different species at all, it will be only as regards certain well-marked and interesting features in their particular economy.

Taking the willows as a whole, then, they are mainly lithe and moisture-loving trees or shrubs of the plains and lowlands. The vast majority, both of species and individuals, love the banks of streams, especially of sluggish and flooded streams, in alluvial valleys. In saying this, however, I do not wish to cast any slight upon the undoubted capacity of the willow tribe for adaptation to the most varied and most arid environments; for, as we shall see by-and-by, certain species of willows have fitted themselves to all stations in life—the highest as well as the lowest, the heath as well as the marshland. Not a few have learnt to accommodate themselves to parched Alpine rocks; while others, and those the majority, bathe their feet in the swamps of the valley. Some of them bask well-content in the tropical sun, while a few dwarfed kinds endure the deadly cold of the Arctic circle. Yet, as a whole, they are chiefly denizens of the temperate regions and of well-watered plains; and it is with these central, typical, and doubtless original willows that I will deal at first, returning later to the outlying herbaceous or Alpine species of subsequent development.

A willow tree takes its origin from a single winged seed, blown about by the wind, or wafted by the current, and so deposited by chance in a favourable situation by a stream or watercourse. In its first year it produces a slender wand-like stem, with a few long tapering leaves, and grows to a height of a foot or eighteen inches. In its second or third year, having laid up material for the purpose over winter, it blossoms incontinently and precociously in the early spring; and it continues to bloom every spring thereafter in the most regular fashion. Few trees of its size set to work to produce flowers so soon, or go on producing them for so many years in such immense numbers and with such industrious assiduity.

The flowers, of course, are catkins, and to understand their structure and function is to understand the whole previous history and evolution of the willow type. For no flowers on earth contain their own story more visibly written in the very shape of their organs. And when one remembers that various forms of willow blossom make up the pretty silvery 'pussy-cats' which children admire in early spring ('Soft, silver notches up the smooth green stem,' Richard Le Gallienne calls them in a dainty poem), and also the so-called 'palm,' used to decorate our northern churches on Palm Sunday, it will be clear that they deserve some little consideration.

The catkins are of two kinds, male and female. When very young they are closely covered and protected from the cold by a large brown scale, which serves as an overcoat; when they swell and grow, with the first warm days of spring, they appear as soft little silky masses, not unlike miniature ducklings. These silky masses are made up of still smaller internal scales, each concealing a single flower of the catkin, and each covered and fringed with delicate shining hairs. One might compare them to flannel shirts or petticoats for the delicate flowers. As the blossoms develop, however, they lose, after a time, their silky appearance, especially in the males, because the stamens outgrow the scales and gradually hide them. In this fully mature stage the male catkin is composed of conspicuous masses of yellow stamens, each catkin enclosing several dozen separate flowers; each individual flower consists of two (or in some species three or more) stamens, with bright golden anthers hanging loosely out on long waving filaments. These golden-yellow male catkins are very handsome and noticeable; and it is they that are oftenest employed as 'palms' to take to church on Palm Sunday. The female catkins, poor things, are always paler, silkier, and less conspicuous. They consist of a number of tiny flowers, each composed of an ovary or undeveloped capsule, half covered by a thin silvery-silky scale.

Both kinds of catkins, of course, blossom together, for the object of blossoming is that pollen from the one plant should be used to fertilise capsules on the other. They also blossom before the leaves are out in early spring—a common habit of catkin-bearing trees, the reason for which we will presently examine. But willows in particular have one curious habit, quite different from that of the other catkin-bearers, which gives a clue, I believe, to half their peculiarities. They are fertilised by insects, while the hazel, the birch, and all the other ordinary catkins are fertilised by the wind. Sir John Lubbock, indeed, in his admirable little book on the *Fertilisation of Flowers*, asserts that the willows also are wind-fertilised; but in this statement that distinguished naturalist is certainly mistaken, as I have long observed, and as you can judge for yourself by standing under a flowering willow any bright day in spring, and listening to the constant hum of the hive-bees and bumble-bees which buzz about the flowers; still more if you watch them closely at their work of impregnation with a little pocket lens. Indeed, it was the attempt to verify or disprove Sir John Lubbock's dictum that first led me to

definite observations on willows. I soon found out that he had generalised too rapidly from the other catkin-bearers; and I was thus led to make observations of my own, the final results of which you behold in this article.

Let us take the willow-catkin a little more fully to pieces now, and see of what it consists. It is a cylindrical spike of many separate flowers, each of which is made up of either an ovary or a set of stamens, without any calyx or any coloured petals. The flower is reduced to its most beggarly elements. The female blossom consists of a single ovary, the male of a pair of stamens (sometimes three). These organs are enclosed in each case within a single bract or scale; but the scale has also within it, both in male and female, one or more tiny glands which secrete a peculiar sticky substance. Now it is for the sake of these glands and their secretion that bees and other insects visit the catkins; so important are they, indeed, to the plant, and so characteristic of the willows, that every willow, no matter how greatly it differs in other particulars—temperate or tropical, tree-like or herbaceous, leading an aquatic life or haunting dry mountains—invariably possesses them. I say, therefore, emphatically, these glands are the *raison d'être* and distinguishing mark of the willow tribe; and the willow as a genus must be explained with special reference to their object and function.

Once more, fully to understand the evolution of the willow, and the use of these glands, we must go back to the developmental history of the catkin-bearers in general.

What is a catkin? Everybody knows what a catkin looks like; but not everybody can define it. It is one of those things which everybody feels, and nobody can formulate. Perhaps a catkin may be best described as a closely clustered spike of rudimentary or degenerate flowers, without visible or conspicuous calyx and petals, usually pendulous, though sometimes erect; its most noticeable external parts being almost always the stamens and pistils. Now, the majority of large forest trees in temperate climates are certainly catkin-bearers; and the origin of catkins must therefore be sought in their peculiar conditions. Taken as a whole (though with numerous important exceptions), I should say, still more briefly, catkins are spikes of small inconspicuous wind-fertilised flowers; and it was for the sake of such compact wind-fertilised organs that the form originated.

You can see the reason for this immediately. In the dead-green forests of tropical climates, where the branches retain their

leaves the whole year round, most trees have relatively large and noticeable flowers, like those of magnolias, catalpas, and tulip trees—flowers represented in the north, among species familiar to us, by the horse-chestnut, the laburnum, the acacia, and the pear tree. Under tropical conditions, indeed, it is almost necessary for the flowers to be fertilised by insects, because, amid the dense and jostling foliage of equatorial woods, the chance of the pollen being blown by the wind to a female blossom of the same sort would be extremely precarious. But in colder climates, where trees shed their leaves yearly, it was easy for enterprising kinds to take advantage of the bare boughs in early spring in order to produce spikes of stamens and pistils which could be fertilised by the wind, before the foliage came forth to interfere with the due distribution of the pollen. This form of fertilisation is peculiarly appropriate for tall trees, because, being raised so high, they afford excellent platforms, so to speak, from which the pollen may be discharged and disseminated. Natural selection has, therefore, taken such full advantage of this method of fertilisation that the vast majority of tall trees in temperate climates are now everywhere catkin-bearers. But we must remember that this state of things could only have begun with the great refrigeration at the end of the Tertiary period, and that the tropics still preserve for us the types of an earlier epoch.

Consider, again, of what nature is the catkin. It is an abbreviated spike of very tiny flowers. It is all for use, and none of it for display. It spends nothing on advertisement, but addresses itself strictly to the business of production of stamens and pistils. Look at the origin of such a spike, and you will understand why it has been found useful under these special circumstances. You get similar but much larger and showier spikes in the foxglove and the hollyhock; there, each flower consists most conspicuously of a big and handsome corolla, which is present by way of advertisement only; it induces bees and other insects to visit and fertilise the blossoms. But in catkins, the spike has been much shortened and crowded; the individual flowers have been greatly reduced; the showy corolla has been entirely suppressed; and little has been left, so to speak, save the pure business elements—the absolutely indispensable stamens and pistils.

How do I know, however, that these simple wind-fertilised forms are not the earliest type of flowers, and that the handsome insect-attracting and petal-bearing types are not descended from

them? I will tell you briefly why. In perfect flowers, having all the parts complete, each whorl or set of organs is inserted alternately with the whorl that preceded it. Hence the petals usually alternate with the sepals, and the stamens with the petals. But in certain species or individuals, it sometimes happens that the petals are not developed; and whenever this occurs (as it often does in our common little pearlwort) the stamens are opposite the sepals, not alternating with them, as would have been the case had there never been any petals. This suppression of petals takes place so regularly, and always with the same result, that we are justified, I think, in drawing a general conclusion—whenever we find a flower with no petals, but with the sepals and stamens opposite to one another, we may infer that it had once (ancestrally) its full complement of petals, which have been lost or suppressed for some sufficient reason. The common nettle supplies a good example of such degenerate petalless blossoms.

This is rather a technical point, I admit; but it may perhaps be forgiven as leading up to our next general principle. The catkin-bearers as a whole are a group of forest-trees, descended from plants which had once conspicuous petal-bearing flowers; but they have lost their petals and crowded their flowers together as a consequence of taking to the more convenient mode of fertilisation by wind. More convenient *to them*, I mean, as northern dwellers in the open forest, where trees in spring are bare and leafless. Of their gradual decline in this direction we have still clear evidence in several existing intermediate types, which preserve for us to this day the various stages in the process of simplification.

Outside the catkin-bearing order itself, we find not a few most interesting foreshadowings of such simplification in the structure of the flower. Thus, in the ash family, bushes like the lilac and the privet still retain their bright-hued bells with conspicuous corollas; while even the South European 'flowering ash' or *ornus* has pretty white blossoms, intended as allurements for the eyes of insects. But in our northern ash, a more boreal form, the petals have entirely disappeared; the flowers are reduced to a couple of purple stamens with an ovary between them, in the most perfect cases,—often, indeed, still further simplified to a pair of stamens alone, or to a solitary ovary. In the elm, again, which is closely related both to the nettles and the catkin-bearers, the original petals have entirely disappeared; but there remains a calyx, coloured bright pink, and sufficiently noteworthy to attract the attention

of many insects. Among the true catkin-bearers themselves, once more, a few, such as the walnut, have flowers almost as normal and perfect as those of the elm. But from this point on we trace a rapid decline in floral architecture. In proportion as the trees have thoroughly adapted themselves to their newer and acquired habit of wind-fertilisation, they have lost all trace of the distinct arrangement into separate flowers, with an individual calyx. In the alder, for example, which may be regarded as the most primitive of our wild English types, the male catkins still show considerable traces of the original perfect flowers. Under each bract or scale in this case lie three tiny blossoms, each composed of four stamens, and each normally enclosed in a wee green calyx. The stamens, however, stand opposite to, not alternating with, the divisions of the calyx (as in the nettle tribe), thus bearing clear evidence to the patent fact that an intermediate whorl of petals has been dwarfed and suppressed. With the female catkins of the same alder, degeneration has gone yet a step further; for there, every bract encloses two tiny flowers, each of which consists of an ovary with only a single scale-like sepal or calyx-piece. From this point onward the loss of form and symmetry proceeds apace. In the birch, each bract or leaf of the male catkin encloses from eight to twelve stamens, roughly and irregularly arranged in three doubtful flowers. Traces of the calyx still exist in this instance in the form of small scales dispersed among the stamens. But the female birch catkin shows hardly a relic of the original arrangement. It is a mere chaotic mass of scales and ovaries. Finally, in the hazel, the stamens, about eight in number (representing apparently two flowers), have no trace of a calyx, but are inserted naked on the under side of the scale or bract which covers them.

Other variations occur in other types. Thus, the beech has the calyx of all three flowers within each bract combined into a single false perianth or envelope; while in the oak the scales are sometimes loosely scattered, sometimes still united into an irregular involucre. The female flowers, again, both in the oak and the hazel, retain some reminiscence of a tubular calyx, which is utilised later in the development of the fruit as a cup or husk for the growing nut.

In almost all these cases, most notably in the hazel and alder, the catkins are formed over winter, so as to open with the first warm days of spring. Since they are all wind-fertilised, they wish to flower while the trees are leafless, when the pollen can be freely

borne by the breezes of March. For the same reason the stamens are usually pendulous and extremely mobile, hanging out on slender threads, so that the pollen may be readily shaken forth upon the air by the faintest movement; while the stigmas or sensitive surfaces of the female flowers, in turn, are feathery and plume-like, adapted to catch every golden grain which may be wafted in their neighbourhood. Furthermore, in all our English forest-trees of this group, the male and female flowers are clustered in distinct catkins; but (save in the willows and poplars) the two sexes grow together on the same tree or bush, though in separate clusters. Most people must be familiar with this combination in the instance of the hazel, where the male catkins form long pendulous 'cat's tails' on the tips of the branches; while the female flowers, a little higher up the bough, are grouped in tiny bud-like erect bunches, with the bright crimson stigmas protruding in a dainty small tassel from the centre. I may also add in passing that among these wind-fertilised kinds, the scales which cover the flowers are often slightly hollow or cup-shaped on the top; the pollen is shed beforehand into these temporary receptacles—each receiving its store from the flowers immediately above it—so that it may be wafted in safety to the neighbouring stigmas as soon as the wind rises high enough to dislodge it.

Now, I do not think we can doubt, if we look after this at the arrangement of the willows, that they must once have passed through a stage essentially similar to that now represented by the oak, the beech, the alder, and the hazel. In other words, they must once have been wind-fertilised catkin-bearers, with the male and female catkins growing side by side on the same tree. In process of time, however, they reverted once more, for good reasons of their own, to insect-fertilisation. But having once lost their petals long ago, and even their calyxes, they could not redevelop them; for it is a curious fact that flowers which have at any time got rid of these decorative envelopes never seem able to reproduce them; they rely instead upon showy stamens, or else on coloured-bracts and floral leaves, like the scarlet poinsettia and the brilliant jatrophas of our hothouses. In the particular case of the willows, it is the stamens that have become very large and showy, making the flowers far more conspicuous than any other catkins; while even the female spikes, though certainly less noticeable, are still quite pretty enough to attract from afar the eyes of insects. The male flowers are largely visited by bees for their pollen; in the females, the secretion from the glands which

I have before mentioned as characteristic of the whole genus forms, I think, the main or sole attraction.

The reversion to insect-fertilisation, which thus strikes the keynote of the willows among the tribe of catkin-bearers from which they spring, has enabled them also to effect a further improvement in the separation of the sexes on distinct trees. Most flowers, of course, have the stamens and pistils in the same blossom, though they often take extravagant pains, by endless clever devices, to prevent the consequent probability of self-fertilisation. Higher and more careful plants, however, often separate the sexes in different flowers, though even here, in many cases, both kinds grow together on the same stem, as in the smaller nettle, the box, and the sedges. But the highest development of all in this respect is reached when the sexes are entirely separated upon different plants, so that cross-fertilisation becomes a physical certainty. Now, the wind-fertilised catkin-bearers, wholly dependent as they are upon the capricious breezes, would not dare thus completely to separate their sexes; because, if the male and female trees happened to grow too far apart, no pollen from one would reach the other. But the willows, relying upon their faithful carriers, the bees, know well that their insect allies can be trusted to search out every tree of their kind for miles around; and therefore they venture to separate their catkins upon specialised male and female individuals. The bees carry the pollen about on their hairy thighs, and sooner or later impregnate the female blossoms; though, since they do not always minutely and accurately discriminate between the species of willows, many natural hybrids result now and again from their injudicious action in this respect.

Most willows still retain the original habit of flowering in early spring, which they inherit from their early wind-fertilised ancestors. This is no disadvantage to the lowland types at least, which thus catch the bees when they have few competitors. But the mountain types flower late in summer, when insects are more numerous on the chilly heights.

After the ovary is fertilised, it rapidly grows out into a curious little woolly conical capsule, enclosing several minute seeds, each tufted with a tail of long white silky hairs. When this capsule is ripe, it opens in two valves, and lets the wind blow away the seeds within, which float freely on their threads, like thistledown or dandelion-fruits. In this way the seeds are dispersed over wide areas of land, sometimes by the wind, and sometimes, when they

fall, by the action of water. These various peculiarities have given the willows such an immense pull in the struggle for life that they are now one of the vastest and most widespread of genera, abounding both in individuals and in species or varieties. They are a dominant class, with many divergent offshoots.

As a group, I believe, the willows had their origin in the North Temperate zone, where they are still most abundant; probably, too, they took their rise in the original Northern Continent, which in Tertiary times linked together Europe, Asia, and Arctic America. Most of them love low plains and sluggish watercourses, for which habitat, I think, they were first developed. Poplars, I take it, represent an early or incipient stage in the evolution of the willow type; they still retain a perianth, or involucre, formed of the scales of the original calyx, which in the true willows have either atrophied or been converted into the sticky glands already mentioned.

Of British willows we have many interesting and characteristic kinds. Among those central types which love the waterside, I may mention especially the white or common willow, much planted by rivers, canals, and streams; it is a considerable tree, when allowed to attain its full height and breadth; but it is most often pollarded, so that the young twigs or withies each year may be used for osiers. For it is a special peculiarity of the willow kind (best seen in that highly evolved Asiatic alien, the Babylonish weeping willow) that its branches are usually slender and limber, as befits a quick-growing waterside tree; whence they are in great request for the finer kinds of basket-making, and the manufacture of wattle-work generally. The variety known as the golden osier is much cultivated for this purpose in regular beds, and is kept always cut back, in order that the branches may be sufficiently supple. But the allied almond willow is the chief withy employed by the fine basket-maker in England; while the common osier is more often utilised for hurdles, network, and coarse hampers or wattles. The sallow is another decided water-lover, less confined to low land; but the minute discrimination of the different species is a difficult piece of work, only to be performed with a good flora and a sound determination to master the question.

These are the chief among our waterside kinds. But the willows, like the masterful type that they are, have by no means confined themselves to their native flats; they have also annexed the moors, the heaths, the commons, the mountains. I was much

struck in ascending Mount Washington in New Hampshire a few years since with the noticeable way in which that isolated peak was zoned or belted, as it were, by different regions of willows, growing shorter and shorter as one reached the summit. And this was not a question of individual dwarfing; the species which grew at the base were tall and water-loving; those which grew at the top were small and shrubby kinds, like the Lapland and the herbaceous willows, while intermediate forms occupied in belts the middle region. Of these upland variants we have an equally illustrative group in our own country. There is the creeping willow, for example, whose stem grows underground, trailing beneath the soil, and sending up here and there branches of a foot or eighteen inches high; this early dwarfed form grows on sandy heaths all over Britain. Then there is the more strictly mountainous Lapland willow, confined with us to the Scotch Highlands—a low and scrubby shrub, still loving the sides of mountain streams, and attaining in their neighbourhood a greater height than on the intervening ridges. Again, there is the yet more moorland whortle willow, a scraggy bush of the stunted mountain sort, never rising above a foot, and with round foliage like a whortleberry; as well as the netted willow, also a Highlander born, which sends up twiggy shoots from a prostrate stem, and never grows upward on its wind-swept heights more than four or five inches. Last of all, there is that most stunted and degenerate mountaineer, the herbaceous willow, a mere low weed, which straggles forth in a creeping stem, running along or beneath the ground for a considerable distance, but producing here and there little upright branches not two inches high; you would never believe it was a willow at all, with its wee round leaves and its herb-like aspect, did you not chance upon it at the moment when it is covered in summer with its tiny degraded and few-flowered catkins. That marks the last stage of degeneracy in the downward history of a great and elsewhere powerful family. From the Lombardy poplar to the herbaceous willow is a far cry. It shows what comes of mountain climbing.

GRANT ALLEN.

## *Bándi Miklós.*

*FROM THE HUNGARIAN OF BENEDEK ELEK.*

*(Abridged slightly.)*

*Letter First.—From Bándi Miklós.*

**D**EAREST MARGIT! Your last words when we parted yesterday were: 'Speak to mamma;' and yet, instead of at once obeying your dear commands, I am about to write you a long letter of I don't know how many sheets.

Just sit down, Margit, and read my letter quietly. There will be nothing extraordinary in it. I only want you to know me thoroughly. For, at present, fair Margit, though we have been acquainted these four years, you know only this: that at the age of eight-and-twenty I was appointed Professor in the University, and that at thirty I proved my gratitude to the Government by coming forward as a Parliamentary candidate on the Opposition side, and, what is more, that I was elected.

What else do you know about me? That I dress in the latest fashion, go to the National Casino, am seen at the races, and, in fact, everywhere; and that 'Bándi Miklós was present' is a not infrequent announcement in the newspapers, which have more than once mentioned me as 'the life of the party.'

Believe me, dear Margit, I have never for a moment enjoyed this society-life. Suddenly, when the chatter has been most animated, my face has clouded over, and I have involuntarily put my hand to my head.

'What is the matter, Bándi?' my attentive hostess has asked kindly.

'Oh, nothing! a passing pain in my head; it's gone now.'

Ah! if any one had guessed what flashed before my mind's eye at such times!

But no one ever did. It is wonderful how fortunate I have been hitherto. I know a hundred men who appear in society,

having a certain air of distinction and a confident manner, and holding distinguished positions too, and yet, all at once, society folks begin to ask one another: 'But who *is* this X—— exactly? Where does he belong? Who are his people?'

Possibly the same question has been asked about me; but I don't think so; no, I don't.

You are smiling, Margit, and perhaps tapping your little foot impatiently, as you say to yourself: 'Who is he, pray? Why, a Professor at the University; and Member for the University too!'

But, dearest Margit, the question as asked by society cannot be answered in this way. I have often wondered why no one ever showed any curiosity as to my family, and I believe the only reasonable explanation is to be found in my name, which has evidently misled people, without any wish or intention on my part.

In my more particular fatherland, Transylvania, there are three sets of Bándis—first, the gentry of that name, beggars of good birth, who stick to the land. People here are aware of their existence, but not a living Bándi of them all has ever made his appearance in Budapest during the past forty years. The second set of Bándis are noblemen without estates. They own a few acres which they plough and sow, and thus live from hand to mouth.

The third set are the peasant Bándis; plain, labouring people, feudal serfs, bound to the soil before '48, now free, but poorer than ever they were.

I know! I know! . . . I can see from here that you have found out already which set of Bándis I belong to.

That is it, that is it—the *third*!

A poor, toil-worn old man is my father; a bent-backed old dame is my mother. Know them, dearest Margit, and you will know me.

I remember one day, when I was, perhaps, eight or nine, my father said to my mother: 'Wife, I have been talking to his Reverence, and he advised me to take Miklós to the town school. We are poor, we can't do much for him, but, wife, I don't care, even if my little bit of land goes—every scrap of it! I have lived hard enough myself, my son shan't live hard too.'

My dear mother wept. 'As you (he') will,' said she.

<sup>1</sup> Third person singular in original, which peasant-women always use in addressing their husbands. The latter use second singular to their wives.

I was an only child ; but this meant no more than that when my mother sent me provisions from time to time to the gymnasium, she could slip in a florin or two as well.

For eight years I was servant to some of the gentlemen. I kept their rooms in order, and I lived hard on their bread. I also regularly did their exercises, and for this they gave me a few extra pence now and again.

My University life I will not attempt to describe, dearest Margit. It was full of terrible privation. But in the third year I distanced all my competitors, and carried off the prizes. One fine day I made my appearance looking as if I had just come out of a bandbox. My comrades opened their eyes very wide at first, but later on they were accustomed to my being always a dandy, and, I believe, even forgot that I had ever been a poor, ragged, hungry-faced student.

God alone knows how my dear father distressed himself about me, and how many tears my mother shed. They knew how hard my life was, though I never complained ; indeed, the less I complained the more the poor old people grieved, and bitterly did they regret ever having sent me to school.

I sent them some money, but they wrote back : ' Don't send any ; better come home. We don't want you to starve for us ! '

I wrote that I had enough ; but it was of no use, they did not believe me.

' Don't send any money, my dear son,' wrote my father in every letter, ' for your mother weeps night and day. She believes you are starving, and so do I.'

Home I went ; not to stay, but to ease the poor old people's minds. I took a pile of newspapers with me to prove that I had an appointment. I took home my books. ' See, here is my name. I wrote them.'

Good heavens ! how the poor old folks did weep !

Said my father : ' My dear boy, I shall lie down in my coffin with joy ! '

' And I too,' wailed my mother ; ' I too.'

But the money which I had sent home, by little and little, there it lay untouched in the tulip-painted chest of drawers.

' Put it in your pocket, my son ; we don't need it at all. You are a grand gentleman ; you want money.' I had to take it back.

But you will ask, dear Margit, why I did not tell you all this a long time ago. My dearest, you never once asked me about my relations, though I should so much have liked to talk of my

dear, good parents. Well, and suppose I had. Would not you have thought I was making a parade of my parents' poverty and simple mode of life when it would have been in *better taste* to talk, if I could, of the family property and distinguished relations?

But I might have married you without your ever seeing my parents, you think?

Yes, I might have done so; but this is precisely what I don't want to do.

Oh, Margit, if you could have heard these old folks talk of my marriage sometimes in the evening!

'I shall never see my *menyemasszony* (my mistress-daughter-in-law),' the old dame would sigh.

'Nor I either, dame.'

And then, his honest eyes resting upon my face, the old man would add:

'You are going to take a wife from some grand family, my boy, I know. We are simple folks. I don't want you to show her to us. It is enough for us to hear of you, and to know that you are happy. Your wife might not be as fond of you, perhaps, if she were to see that you are the son of a poor peasant. We have each got one foot in the grave. My boy, don't bring her home.'

'No, no! and I say just the same. . . . Oh! but I should so like to see her!' said the old dame uneasily. 'If I could but kiss my darling's snow-white face and tiny hand, just once!'

'But I haven't any wife at present, mother dear. Besides, she won't be a stuck-up fine lady. She will love you; she will want to see her husband's parents.'

'An ugly old man and an ugly old woman!' The old man seemed to age as he spoke. 'To be sure'—and now he grew younger again—'they used to look at me thirty years ago—grand ladies, too, didn't they wife? And your mother was a handsome woman, too, that she was!'

'And you are handsome still, my dear, good old souls.'

And, indeed, dearest Margit, they are! If you could see them just once; and their house and yard, and tiny flower garden, where they go 'pit-patting' about from morning till night. They are always talking about the lovely young lady whom Miklós is going to marry. They don't know who her father and mother are, but she is always floating before their eyes.

They often lie awake in the long winter nights.

'Are you asleep, wife?'

'No, *uram* (sir); no, I can't sleep.'

'Nor I either. Thinking of your son, eh?'

'Just so, *uram*, just so, and the golden-haired *menyem-asszony*. And you are too, eh?'

'Ay, wife, just so!'

By daybreak the old dame is up and slipping into the next room, the young folks' room, where not a soul but the old people ever goes. The old dame has been furnishing and adorning it for years past. The nosegay in the long-necked jug on the table is never allowed to fade all the summer through. The little windows are full of flowers—marjoram, verbena, fuchsias, red carnations—and she waters them night and morning.

One day the two will be stepping out to the gate, and looking down the road a hundred times.

'Suppose they were to come unexpectedly! They won't write, they'll just come!'

These are my parents, and I want to 'gild' their last days. I love you with the love of an honest man. You are my first, my last, and my only love. But if I must choose—Margit, dearest Margit, don't let me finish the sentence!

And now, tell me: am I to speak to your mother? I ask but one word in answer—'yes' or 'no.'

I kiss your hands,

BÁNDI MIKLÓS.

*Letter Second.—From Szemerjai Margit.*

DEAR BÁNDI,—You ask me to send just one word in answer to your letter—'yes' or 'no;' and certainly if I were the same to-day that I was yesterday, it would be easy to write either the 'yes' or the 'no' without hesitation. But you must understand, Bándi Miklós, that the Szemerjai Margit who said 'Speak to mamma' exists no longer. I gaze at myself in the glass, but I see a stranger.

You have told me the story of your life, and how you, the young man of fashion, were not so long ago a half-starved student, with an old man and woman weeping over you night and

day at home. And now they are so happy, you say, and you long to brighten their last days. . . . With whom? With me! With *me*!

But, Bándi Miklós, do you know who I am?

'I know, I know,' you will say.

But, indeed, you know nothing at all. My father is Imperial and Royal Chamberlain—that is true! My mother is a Baroness—that is also true! But beyond this you know nothing.

Despise me, *uram*; but when I said 'And I love you; speak to mamma,' I was *telling a lie*. I had no love for you, not the veriest grain!

Having been brought up to be *sensible*, I saw that you possessed all the qualifications necessary for the husband of Szemerjai Margit—a distinguished position, youth, good looks, gentlemanly manners, and so on; and, to crown all, you are of good family. I never gave this last matter so much as a thought; it seemed so much a matter of course.

Alas! for me, a thousand times alas! if any one else had told me that you were the son of peasant-parents. But, alas! still more if you yourself had told me only when my word was pledged and I could not honourably draw back.

Suppose I were to marry you without love, thinking lightly, as is the fashion in our world: 'sympathy is enough, what do we want with love?'

The difference in my life would amount to this: I should go about with you instead of mamma. You would take me to balls, concerts, races, to drive in the Stefania, to baths, &c. Our life would be most elegant and correct. I should like you for a companion, because you are good-looking, clever, distinguished, gentlemanly; and you would like to have me with you, for I am not such a fright, and I am no goose either! I know how to dress, and how to be a pleasant hostess.

Well, that is the sort of married life I had pictured to myself. And when the benediction has been pronounced and we are at the station, you will take tickets, not for Venice, but—for Brassó (Cronstadt), and you will say, 'Dearest, let us go and see my parents—my poor, simple parents!'

I am horrified, I quiver in every fibre, when I think of the shock such an unexpected turn of events would have given me. What, I, Szemerjai Margit, find myself connected with a family of serfs! Monstrous! monstrous!

Our marriage could not have been happy, really happy, under

any circumstances, but we might have got on comfortably enough for some perhaps even to envy us. But what would have followed upon *this* would not have been mere lack of happiness. I should have *hated* you! for you would have lured me into a trap, and that is a crime which you could not have washed out; no! not with an ocean of love, however deep.

But see, now here you stand before me, and I shrink away to nothing as I stammer out, 'Forgive me, *uram*, forgive me!' I see how great you are, and how small am I!

Miklós, Bándi Miklós, take me by the hand and lift me up, lift me up! Teach me to love you as deeply and truly as you do your parents—the old people who talk so often of their son Miklós and the golden-haired *menyemasszony*. Ah! it is my face and hand the old dame would like to kiss; mine! mine! And I—I should like to kiss the horny hands which have raised you from the dust, just for this, only this—for I feel that God is infinitely gracious to me—because now you will raise me!

Miklós! hear me. My empty heart is filled with a feeling I have never known before. My fate is in your hands. A new Szemerjai Margit stands before you, and confesses her love for you. What does the world matter to me! I should like to stand on the top of the highest mountain and shout 'Bándi Miklós loves *me*!' You don't understand what it is for one suddenly to feel that she has a heart. You don't understand, for you have always had a heart. I never had till I read your letter.

Come, come and 'speak to mamma.' You may come, you may fly! My father and mother know all. Papa read the letter aloud. For a moment his face clouded over, and mamma turned pale. But then, all at once—if you could but have seen—his words were broken by sobs; and, before he got to the end, we were all three weeping in one another's arms.

'Oh! my God!' he sobbed; 'I thank Thee for giving me a son, in place of a son.' And the grave face, which has never brightened since the death of my brother Andor, was beaming with joy.

Miklós, you have already made my parents' last days golden, and now it depends upon yourself whether I shall do the same for yours. Command me!

MARGIT.

*Letter Third.—From Bándi János.*

MY DEAR SON MIKLÓS,—With tearful eyes I read the letter in which you tell us, your poor parents, that you are going to take to wife the only daughter of his Excellency Mr. Szemerjay Gábor. Heaven's blessing on you both, my heart's children!

Your mother and I have been weeping ever since we had your letter, but from joy.

What a hard life you have had, O child of my heart, until now that the good God has come to your aid, blessed be His holy name!

And how I have worried myself! . . . Well, we shall not go to your wedding, my dear son! It is not for us to be among smart gentlefolks. They would look down upon us and you, too. Your mother would like to be present though, if she could, without being seen; and so should I, as I tell her.

At night, when we can't sleep, we often talk about how we could be there without being seen. We should not certainly dare to get into the 'steam-carriage.' We have once seen it rushing away from Brassó, when we were taking in a load of wheat. The price of that load would be just enough, says your mother. It would take two loads, say I. No, my boy, we shall not try the steam-carriage. Besides, it is not for such as we.

You write that you are going to bring your wife to see us. My dear boy, think well what you are about. What is there to see in us simple old folks? Our house is clean, but everything in it is home-made. And we cannot treat your wife to delicacies, though we would give her our very hearts.

Well, your mother is not so timid as I, though. She tells me I am just to write 'Come,' and the *menyemasszony* will soon order all as she pleases.

The old dame has been talking already to a woman in the village who has lived many years in gentlemen's houses, and can, they say, cook such fine dishes that—meaning no disrespect—even the Queen would suck her fingers after them!

'Why, then, let them come!' I say to your mother. The little room is like a chapel—that I myself can answer for. There are eight pillows to each of the beds. They were your grandmother's, but they have never been used yet. I tell your mother that three apiece would be enough, but it is no use. She says if she had as many again she would have them all out, for 'she knows that the darling *menyemasszony* has been spoilt.'

'Well, I believe so too,' say I.

Her father is a Chamberlain, which is something tremendously high, isn't it, my boy? and her mother is a Baroness! What we cannot anyhow take in is, how you can venture to ask her hand.

We asked his Reverence; and a blessing be on every word he said, for it eased our minds. He explained that, when any one really loves a man, she does not consider his humble origin. And, my dear son, he also said that you were such a first-rate man, and so distinguished, that even a countess might fall in love with you. We gave thanks to God, your mother and I, both of us, that things are as they are.

Your mother wanted to make a few letters too, but there is no room in this. What she would have written, however, is, 'Come home, my dearest son, Miklós, and bring my darling golden-haired *menyemasszony*, too. I eat her little diamond heart.' There, then, I have written it! We send our sincere respects to their Excellencies, your father-in-law and mother-in-law. Give them a humble message from us not to be anxious about their precious daughter while she is here, for we will care for her with the most faithful affection.

You, my son, are held in honour by all the folks of the village. They will be waiting for you with a large band of music at the end of the village, where there is to be a gateway wreathed with flowers. We shall just wait in our own courtyard; and I remain your own father,

BÁNDI JÁNOS.

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*Letter Fourth.—From Margit.*

MY DEAREST MAMMA,—It is a week already since I left your arms; a whole week since I, too, became a wife, the happiest wife in the world—the wife of Bándi Miklós, son of a poor serf. Is it a dream, or is it the truth? There are moments every now and then when I think it is a dream, a strange dream, and I start up terrified.

It is not that I wonder how I, daughter of the Imperial and Royal Chamberlain, can be the wife of a peasant's son. No! the difficulty now is quite the other way; and at times I am seized with a strange wonder as to whether all that Miklós wrote of his parents' poverty and privations was not, after all, a pretty romance, invented to touch my heart. For, mamma, you must know that I should be unhappy now if my Miklós were not what he is—the son of a poor old man with horny hands.

No! no! all that Miklós wrote was true, from the first word to the last; it is the real, sweet truth. As for his position, and the wonderful way in which he takes his place in the great world—these are mere accessories. It is the true-hearted man whom I adore—the man who would not lead me to the altar until his life lay before me as an open book, and the son who has never forgotten his parents, in spite of the vanities and glitter with which he has been surrounded.

Oh, mamma! but Miklós's parents are dear, good-looking old folks! I don't know how to describe them. Old Bándi may have been a little taller than Miklós in his young days, and is such a fine old man, just such as my Miklós will be. Though he is seventy years old, the old man's face is as red as a rose—not all over, but just in one spot, as if he had a little rose painted there.

'It is the family complexion,' said the old man.

'Then why is not Miklós as rosy?'

'Oh! that's another thing, *menyemasszony*. His face was just the same until he deserted us.'

'The air of Pest, *menyemasszony*,' explained the old dame, 'it is that which has washed out his roses.'

The old dame! I have not said anything yet about her; and I don't know which of them to begin with. She is all heart and sound sense. It is really marvellous, and what I never could have dreamt.

I shall never forget our arrival. Indeed, it was exactly as the old man had said. There was a band, and an archway, painted and wreathed, and the whole population waiting for us. His Reverence received us and made a beautiful speech.

Miklós stammered out something, but his voice was choked, and my eyes, too, were swimming. I could not see, I only felt that the women and girls were rushing to me and kissing my hands and dress. And yet, what good had I ever done them, poor things?

'The old folks are waiting at home,' I heard them say.

Yes, there they were, with the gate standing wide open—an old man in holiday-dress, with his hat off and swimming eyes, and a kind-looking old dame. I don't know whether it was old Bándi or Miklós who helped me down from the carriage. All I do know is that my head rested for a long time on the old dame's bosom, and that she had no voice to say more than 'My sweet child!'

When I was released from her dear, kind arms, the old man, whose eyes were still shining, gently took my hand, and, putting his left tenderly on my shoulder, looked fixedly in my face and said just this, and no more: 'Now I can believe that you married Miklós for love.'

And then, whether we took the old people, or they us, I don't really know, but we stepped into the entry, and from thence into a room on the right—our room—which has been closed to strangers for years, and is just as Miklós described it.

The walls are white, with here a wreath of flowers, there one of wheat-ears, and there a picture, and so on, all round. The pictures are what the old dame has cut from the newspapers and had framed, but they are all the portraits of celebrities. There are wreaths over the beds, too, and all made by the old people. There is no superfluous furniture, but there is all that is necessary. The divan is covered with striped woollen stuff, spun and woven by the old dame. The coverlets on the beds, too—the old dame wove them all. As for the embroidered borders of the pillow-cases and the sewing—why, it is all a work of art! And how clean and neat everything is, in the house and out of it! A flaming red hollyhock pokes its head in at one of the two windows which look into the flower garden. A third window looks into the courtyard, and another, quite small, into the vegetable garden. This is the 'spy-hole,' from which *anyámasszony* (my mistress-mother) watches the fowls, to see whether they are scratching among her plants.

Only fancy, mamma; yesterday, as I was looking out of the 'spy-hole,' I caught sight of an old hen scratching among the cabbages. I 'shished' at her over and over again, but to no purpose.

'Shish! shish! Don't you go scratching up *anyámasszony's* plants!' but she did not so much as turn round.

*Nosza!* Well, out I ran, caught up a birch-broom in the entry, and so out into the garden. The next moment Mistress Hen was scuttling 'over hedges and ditches' with a terrible amount of clucking, I promise you.

Just as I turned round in stepped *anyámasszony*. She clapped her hands and cried out, 'Oh, my sweet, golden-voiced chicken!' in huge delight.

Old Bándi, too, came out all in a hurry, and Miklós with him.

'There now!' said *apámuram* (my Mr. Papa), 'there, wife! let us give up the management to the young folks; they would

keep everything in fine order, and we could fold our hands and live on what is put ready for us.'

'Oh! what ever are you talking of?' scolded the old dame.

'Let him talk,' said I; 'I like to hear him so much.'

And *apámuram* is joking and telling stories all day long. He goes by the name of the 'old hussar' here in the village. That is what *anyámasszony* calls him too. And he has such a number of interesting stories to tell of the time when he was in the army. He and his father, and grandfather too, were all hussars. Miklós's grandfather went 'to foreign parts;' he was in France and saw Paris.

'Ay, but that is a large town,' says the old hussar, repeating what he has heard from his father. 'Pest is but a village to that.'

He knows, though, that Pest has had time to grow a good deal since those days.

*Anyámasszony* is constantly telling him to be quiet. 'Bless you! don't talk so much nonsense! Why, I'm sure you have told the *menyemasszony* that tale ten times over already!'

And she is quite right. *Apámuram* tells some of his favourite stories every day; but I listen quite gravely and attentively, and declare to *anyámasszony's* face that I have not heard *this* one before, and *apámuram* is so grateful to me for listening.

Miklós just smiles, presses my hand, and gazes in my face; he, too, is so grateful to me for listening to the old man's stories. And really, mamma, it is quite a pleasure to do so. He has seen so much, and—what I should not have believed—he has read so much. Miklós has always sent him books and newspapers, and one can talk to him about everything except—the theatre. That, he says, he does not understand.

Every night Miklós puts me through an examination.

'Be honest, *édesem* (my sweet), would you like to go on somewhere else? Which of the baths shall I take you to?'

'I don't want to go anywhere,' I protest; 'I should like to spend the whole summer here with your old folks.'

And it is no affectation, believe me. Wherever we might go it would be all one to me if Miklós were with me. But would anybody anywhere else be so delighted to have me as these good old souls are? I won't part them from their son as long as we can stay. Of course I have parted them, anyhow. In a week or two we shall go, and who knows whether they will ever see us,

their most precious treasures, again? They have reared one child, and for whom? For *me* and *no one else*!

Would it not be heartless of me to grudge them a few weeks? Why should I not make their last days golden, when by so doing I please not only them and not only God, but myself besides?'

Oh, mamma dearest! if you could see the tender, anxious love with which these simple folk surround me! They give themselves no airs to any one, and they make no parade of their happiness. And what care they take never to be in the way of us foolish young lovers!

We often go out in the meadows and rye-fields, and in the wood close by; we visit all the places which Miklós cares for, because he remembers them from his childhood. I always call the old folks to come too, and I see from their eyes how much they would like to come—indeed, they would toddle with us to the world's end—but come they never will, no not for all the treasures of the earth. They have always some excuse.

'They are not up to going on foot nowadays.'

'And going for walks is not for such plain folks as they.'

'You just go by yourselves, my dear children, you go. The chimney-corner is the place for the old folks.'

'Ay, so it is, so it is!'

But they accompany us as far as the gate. And they don't take their eyes off us as long as we are in sight. We turn round again and again to nod our farewells, and they nod too; and I seem to hear the old dame's voice saying, 'Oh, my sweet golden chicken!' (that is I) and the old man muttering, 'A fine couple, that they are, a fine couple!'

They stand looking after us a long, long time, even after we have turned down another road, and they gaze and gaze into the distance on the chance of our reappearing somewhere.

No, I will write no more, dearest mamma. . . . I am so infinitely happy that I tremble for fear it should not last. I have everything here but yourselves, I miss nothing but you.

I'll tell you what, my own good mamma: *Come down here*. You and *apuska* (little papa) take us by surprise. You will find a fly at the station. Get in and tell the coachman to drive to Baczon. Then, when you reach the village, there is no need to ask any one where old Bándi János lives. Just let the coachman drive straight on till he comes to a gate ornamented with the device of a dovecot, on the right side of the way.

'But there may be other "dovecot-gates" besides,' you say.

And so indeed there are. But *apámuram's* gate bears the following inscription:—

This house was built, God helping them, by Bándi Huszár János,  
and his wife, Nagy Borbála.

A blessing on those who come in—

Peace to those who go out!

When you have found this gate, drive boldly in. Come, come! I kiss the hands of you both.—MARGIT.

SELINA GAYE.

## *Another Arcady.*

Ille terrarum mihi præter omnes  
Angulus ridet.—Hor. *Od.* II. vi.

**T**HAT little nook of the world on each side of and among the Black Mountains, which separate Herefordshire and Brecknockshire, seems to those who know it best to be a survival from another century; a patch of the England of a hundred years ago set down in the England of to-day. 'I know not how it is, but some of us in this century find ourselves possessed by an insatiable yearning not to speculate upon the future but to get into touch with the past.' Here, indeed, we can study the past with something like success; and not only are the 'minor antiquities of the generations immediately preceding ours' unfolded for us in every farmhouse and cottage, but nature too is seen at its best—inanimate nature in the great solemn mountain wastes and green hillsides, animate nature in the wealth of life in every hedgerow and field and tree.

And this green wilderness takes our imagination by storm in its very aloofness from all that makes up the world of to-day. What seems to be its greatest want is indeed its greatest charm. It is just because it offers nothing that is new, nothing that is exciting, nothing that is of to-day more than of yesterday, only 'the old loved things,' that the remembrance of it comes back to us in crowded London streets like a sea breeze, like a gale that bestows much more than a momentary bliss. Thought, and human life and its conditions, are for ever changing; and while we are still pondering over what seems to be the problem or the book of to-day, some new problem has arisen before the other has been set at rest, and there is a life and stir in the very air. But the world of nature is so different from all this! It makes no imperious demands on our time or on our thoughts. We leave it and come back to it and find it as we left it, except for the

season's difference—except that the tender green of spring leaves has turned to yellow, and the summer birds have gone away. It wears the same face to us as it did to Homer. 'The sighing of the coming south wind,' 'the beating of the billows upon the shore,' 'streams down-falling through the rocky glens,' sound to us as they did to Virgil; the goldfinches sing the same song above the hedge to-day as they sang to him in his Italian summers so long ago. The

daisies pied and violets blue,  
And lady-smocks all silver white,  
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue,  
Do paint the meadows with delight

now as they did when Shakspeare looked on them in the fields by Stratford. Or, leaving poetry, White's beautiful 'Selborne' will never grow old, never cease to have a place in the world's affections, because the little lives therein so gracefully discoursed of will not change as the centuries go by.

And then this green wilderness has those other charms which appeal to some more strongly than even the charms of nature can do. We all remember how Dean Stanley wrote of the Alps as 'unformed, unmeaning lumps;' unless history or great fiction had left its impress on scenery, it was nothing to him. And Scott too, in the words of Professor Shairp, was one who 'looked on the earth most habitually as seen through the colouring with which historic events and great historic names had invested it.' But in many minds this feeling works in a still more subtle way, 'and it is this: wherever men have been upon earth, even when they have done no memorable deeds, and left no history behind them, they have lived and they have died, they have joyed and they have sorrowed; and the sense that men have been there and disappeared leaves a pathos on the face of many a now unpeopled solitude.' And these are the things which give an additional charm to the solitudes of which I write, although they are not wholly unpeopled: these traces of a vanished humanity in the shape of pathetic old farmhouses, grey and gaunt now; of some ruined priory almost hidden in wild brushwood; of some little whitewashed church gleaming from among dark yew-trees on the hillside.

. . . . .

So far I have been thinking of the district on each side of and among the Black Mountains. But now I must narrow the

horizon to one little township therein, and to recollections of half-hours spent in its fields and by its old-fashioned chimney corners and those of its immediate surroundings.

This township takes in a long ridge of low hill which slopes down to a little river, such a river as Bewick loved, and drew again and again. Again and again has he drawn these rocky banks, the deep shadows under the black alder trees, the sparkle of the sunshine beyond, the great boulders over which you know the brook is singing its quiet tune, the white-breasted dipper on the stone—you think you can hear its wild sweet song and the ripple of the passing water. On the opposite side, the western side of the brook, the great solemn wall of the Black Mountains bounds the view, and creeping as far up it as plough can work are little fields of uncertain outline with white cottages among them. But the plough is soon beaten back by rock and steepness, and the ingenuity of man will not easily reclaim these beautiful wastes.

By the side of the brook there is a road—road and brook run almost side by side for miles. But the majority of the houses are in the fields, and are reached by cart-tracks which are only rough watercourses or grassy lanes, but all are beautiful with those tall hedgerows which give food and shelter to birds and hours of interest to all bird-lovers. And again, to some of the houses the only approach is a footpath across the pleasant fields and over those stone stiles which are another feature of this country.

The farms are small and are chiefly pasture, sheep pasture; and this will explain those tall hedges,

Hardly hedgerows, little lines  
Of sportive wood run wild,

which at first sight we might attribute to bad farming. But here they mean no such thing. The country is high and exposed to heavy winds from the mountains, and these hedges are a useful shelter for the stock; indeed, they are a necessity.

But if here, as everywhere, some of the land shows the effects of the bad times, yet, on the other hand, though nowhere is there 'high farming,' there is much that does credit to perseverance, brains, and hard work. I have seen a crop of turnips on this hillside of which any farmer might well be proud.

Of the smaller holdings on the mountain-side many are lineal descendants, if I may so say, of holdings on the waste ground of the manor, granted in remote times by the then lord to his followers, and the rent for which was some service rendered to

him, or payment in kind, now commuted into a nominal chief rent. In all but name these copyholds seem to be freeholds, and the interest of the matter lies in its being a living relic of feudal law, as are also the heriots which remain in force, although they too are no longer paid in kind. The houses on such holdings are mostly, as I said, little whitewashed buildings, gleaming from afar, and the dwellers in them are farmers on a small scale with a sheep run on the mountain.

But the farmhouses on the opposite hill—on the eastern side of the brook, that is—are of a somewhat larger and more substantial type, though they are not by any means large. They nestle in sheltered and sunny nooks on the side of the hill. The trees above them, blown into strange umbrella-like shapes by mountain winds, show that the men were wise who trusted their houses only to these more sheltered spots. The aspect is well chosen, but the houses themselves, when placed mentally beside the far larger ones in the eastern countries, seem very sombre, very colourless. Red walls, red-tiled roofs, warm yellow corn-stacks; that is the colouring of a fen farm, and very beautiful it is. The almost cottage-like farmhouses here are either of sad grey stone with great porches, and all roofed, too, with grey stone, on which lichen does not readily thrive, or of black timber with plaster between. The plaster is laid over a wattling of sticks filled in with coarse mortar in all the older buildings of this class hereabouts. By the farms stand a few hayricks, and the effect on the eye is greyness. It is sombre to a degree. There is 'the hue of eld' over even last year's haystack. The houses are a hundred or even two hundred years older than those of the east country, or of the grand farmhouses on Cotswold farms, which look as if they had been built in the glorious days of farming at the beginning of the century, but which are far less picturesque than the homely ones in the district of which I am writing.

As a rule there is an absence of flowers around these farmhouses: there are 'no roses bright, wreathed o'er the walls in garlands of delight.' You approach them through a fold-yard, and this gives a squalid appearance to the whole. And as the cattle are often turned into the fold there is no safety for flowers in front of the house. But some of the cottage gardens are beautiful indeed. I remember one; a little flagged path with beds on each side, and then—'. . . here's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray you, love, remember; and there's pansies, that's for thoughts. . . .

There's fennel for you and columbines ; there's rue for you, and here's some for me. We may call it herb-of-grace o' Sundays. . . . You may wear your rue with a difference. There's a daisy. . . . It is quite a Shakspearean garden indeed.

Inside the houses there is much that belongs to other days than these. The 'minor antiquities of the generations immediately preceding ours' are, as Goldwin Smith has told us, becoming rare as compared with those of remote ages, because nobody thinks it worth while to preserve them. But in these old farms we find so many relics of a bygone time. Are there many districts in England, do you think, where you will still see men threshing with flails as they do hereabouts ?

Such a sight will prepare us for the old-fashioned interiors, for all the old-world things which are to be found in these homesteads. It is generally by a deep porch, with stone seats on each side, that we enter the large kitchen. It is large because it was built in the days when the farmer had labourers to help in the fields, and the mistress of the house had women servants to help with the spinning and the poultry ; and all who lived under the same roof had their meals together in this room.

The doors are sometimes studded with nails like church doors. One that I know is secured by a great rough wooden bolt drawn right across it into an iron loop on the opposite side at night, and in the daytime thrust back into a hole in the thickness of the wall. But the majority are more homely than this and have only a latch inside, raised from outside by a leather thong, or by 'tirling at the pin,' as in the old ballad.

Some of the wide chimneys still remain, with a stone seat on each side, and sometimes there are iron dogs and a wood fire burning on the low hearth. The old iron 'hangers' for pots are very common. Oak dressers are almost universal, and so are oak settles, which are a necessity in these draughty houses. And perhaps we may see a four-post bed, with oak-panelled back and top, while the long oak tables, at which a household of twelve or more could sit down at once, are very common. China of much interest is seldom seen, but there are some of those glazed jugs with an iridescent sheen on them, the art of making which is, I am told, a lost one. But we may see a set of pewter plates and dishes (which are round like the plates, but much larger), brass mortars and pestles, brass or iron trivets, great brass milk-pans, and, indeed, many a strange old-world thing, which it is more delight to meet with in its real home on a cottage mantelpiece or dresser

than in a curiosity shop. I am not, of course, intending to say that these things are universal or found in every house. But they are more common than elsewhere, and, fortunately, the district is not one which dealers can easily reach.

Some of these interiors are so beautiful in their peacefulness, their 'tranquillity of order.' I am thinking of one such now; the old porch, the large kitchen, the carved oak chest, the inlaid chest of drawers with its engraved brass locks and handles, the puppy sheepdog who has squeezed himself into the snug chimney corner and looks out furtively at the strangers, the picturesque old figure sitting by the fire in the wan December sunlight, knitting yarn which is spun from the fleeces of her own sheep. Her small hands move as deftly as if she were seventeen instead of seventy; her hair is smooth and glossy as a girl's. This is not absolutely a wilderness where no man is, but it will show that it is thinly populated when I say that we walked two miles to this farm and met no one on the way.

But the most characteristic and altogether unique feature of this nook of earth is that it is full, brimming over, with superstition. It is difficult to believe that there is still a district in England where superstition is part of the life of the people. But here that difficulty presents itself again and again as we talk with old cronies over their fires, or along the green lanes. As you look at their keen wrinkled faces, on which common-sense, shrewdness, and long experience have set their marks, you wonder have they made such sinners of their memory as to credit their own fantasy, or——But what other solution can we find at our time of day?

My attention was first drawn to this subject by seeing here and there, over the door of more than one house, a bough of birch suspended. If you ask the meaning of this, you will be told, with no suspicion of the humour of the thing, *that it is good to keep off the witches*. And—though this is straying—in the Border Minstrelsy of the other Border, the Northern Border of which this Western one so often reminds me, the birch tree is surrounded with mystery too. It is the growth of other fields than those of earth; and this may be the wherefore of its earthly likeness having supernatural virtues.

It fell about Martinmas,  
When nights are lang and mirk;  
The carline's wife's twa sons came hame,  
Their hats were o' the birk!

It neither grew in syke or ditch,  
 Nor yet in any sheugh;  
 But at the Gates of Paradise  
 The birk grows fair enough.

But let some of the dwellers in these valleys themselves tell of their own superstitions. Here is old Mr. Davies coming up the lane with his sheepdog at his heels. He is a keen-eyed man of business; a man of the world, as far as the world goes in this corner of it; a man who could no doubt farm his acres successfully in bad times. One glance at his cheerful old face will tell you better than many words can do that he is no 'afternoon farmer,' as we say about here, but one who gets up early and prospers accordingly. Leaning on his tall hazel staff—it is like the staff of a shepherd in a Nativity—he stops to talk. He tells you that he has been writing to the local paper to advise the nearest railway company (its nearest station is many miles away; no railway whistle is heard here) to bring a light railway up the valley, and he chuckles with amusement at your horror of such a destroyer of the beauty of the place. But if you ask him about a ghost which you have been told haunts this lane, his keen old face becomes serious at once. No ghosts or goblins had troubled him, he says, but Charles Jones and another chap had been terribly frightened by a flame of fire—it wasn't a will-o'-the-wisp, you mind—as came from near the birches and disappeared by Ivans's (Evans's) farm. He hadn't seen that himself, but he will tell you what he has seen—yes, sure—and that was once when he was up by where the parson lives. It was about twelve o'clock at night, or mebbe nearer one, and he saw, as plain as could be, a funeral coming along, and he heard the hum of voices like as you might if you went into Abergavenny market; but he could not hear what they did say. It came along the narrow part of the road and went towards the village. And he did mind too how a very large funeral came through Hay one night and the man at the pike (there were turnpikes in those days) ran to open the gate and 'twas all vanished! He had often heard tell of that, and so he wasn't put about when he did see it himself.

And I think it was this same Mr. Davies who said one day, in all seriousness, that he did think wizards 'ought to be encouraged, for they could tell a man a many things he didn't know—about the weather and that—as would be useful to un.' For

there are still wizards, and wise women too, about here. They prescribe charms, and collect herbs and 'witch's butter' along the hedgerows. A quiet, inoffensive race, their mission to cure and not to harm; and very unwilling to talk of their beliefs to any except those who come believing in them too.

At the end of a bit of common land—there are many such bits here about—lives Mrs. Price. Hers is that Shakspearean garden of which I spoke just now, and hers, too, a cottage which is a temple of neatness, and she a fit presiding genius thereof. She is a bustling, practical woman, but she too can add to our stock of lore.

Of ghosts she knows nothing, but she can tell you, and very prettily too, in Herefordshire Doric—*Δωρίσδεν δ' ἔξῃστι, δοκῶ, τοῖς Δωριέεσσι*—about a Holy Thorn which grew in a hedge near here, 'and it did blossom on Old Christmas Day. Not to say,' she adds with great truthfulness, 'as she had seen it for herself, but by what she did hear it did like bud out white all over. But so many folks did come about to see it, that the master took and cut it down. It was a very wicked thing of him to cut it down, for it was a Holy Thorn, and he didn't live long arter he'd done it.' She has often heard too that at Christmas 'the heifers and things do kneel down in the fields at midnight, with the tears running down their faces,' and the bees are out and buzzing around their hives, 'like as if it were midsummer'—so hallowed and so gracious is the time.

But it is to old Thomas that I owe most of my information about the past life of the district. He is nearly eighty. His recollections go back seventy years; and seventy years here mean more than they do elsewhere. As I talk to him I think with Wordsworth that the supernatural element in his life makes him 'greater than he seems.' He wears, indeed, a workhouse suit; he and his wife live (who can tell how they manage to live?) on a parish allowance; and yet he is always cheerful, always contented.

He remembers the days when there were stocks in the churchyard, and, more wonderful still, he remembers those who remember the days when men were put into them. He remembers how they played fives in the churchyard while service was going on in the church; and the red line along the whitewashed wall remains to this day 'to witness if I lie.' And in his grandmother's time there were fairies about. They used to come inside the house on rough, stormy nights when the household were gone to bed. They spoke Welsh about

here in those days; and his mother often told him, when he was a little boy sitting in the chimney corner, how his grandfather would say to his grandmother, 'Come to bed, Nelly vach' (little Nelly); 'there's them outside as wants to come in.' They would leave bread and cheese, and cider too, ready for the little elves, of whom Thomas said 'he never heard no harm. They were little people, he supposed—that was all he knew of them.' He has stories of ghosts and witches, and of those who could 'lay ghosts' and 'break witchcrafts,' one of these, alas, long since vanished specialists being a certain Parson Jones, an M. A. of Oxford. And it was he, I think, who told us of a man who found a pipkin full of old guineas hidden under a thorn tree in his garden; and the possession of all that wealth only made him want to possess more, and so he scraped and saved, and lived on dry crusts 'as no one else would eat,' and was none the happier for his wealth. He, or such as he, can tell us too of the sheep-stealers on the mountains, whose annals are as exciting as those of the deer-stealers of former days. But on one subject he is reticent to a degree: the subject I mean of the illicit stills which were once not unknown in the farmhouses among these hills. When we asked him had he ever heard of people distilling whisky hereabouts, he got surprisingly deaf—he who had heard every question so far.

'Witches?' he said.

'No, whisky—spirits; distilling spirits, you know.'

'Spirits? Ghosts?'

It was useless. His ready wit evaded every form in which the question was put to him; and we must remain in ignorance of the how and where, but more firmly convinced that distilling had once gone on here, and that years after it had died out old Thomas preserved his old-world fear of the exciseman.

As for wages, when he was a boy, five pounds a year and food, but not clothes, was the wage for a good all-round man who could 'plough and sow, and reap and mow.' Boys got two or three pounds according to their capabilities.

Flax was extensively grown in his young days, and was harvested, and sent to the weavers in the towns as it was needed, to be woven into a rough stuff much used for shirts. The roughness wore off in a short time, but the young farmers often got the men to wear their new shirts to take the roughness off for them. Fustian or moleskin jackets, low shoes, knitted stockings, and breeches, and gaiters, were the usual costumes for farmers, but 'the best sort' wore buckles in their shoes and

broad-cloth' suits. The labourers wore smocks made of Russian duck, which was so stout and waterproof that no rain would run through it. The art of making these frocks is not yet a lost one, but there is little request for it now.

When Thomas was a boy they used to plough with oxen, and he spoke with real affection of the tall Herefordshire cattle, Butler, and Scarlet, and Swan, whose horns were so long that they had to turn their heads sideways every time they went into the 'beast-house.' 'They were great, towardly things, as quiet to drive as could be, and would work splendid. The farmers did work them on the land five years and then sell them to the butchers.'

'Was there much drinking in your young days, Thomas?'

'Not a lot. There were cider shops, as we did call un. They hadn't licenses, but any one as could make cider did like to sell it. They were hardish times then. Folks as could make a shilling any way were glad to do it.'

'Are people better off about here now than they used to be?'

'I can hardly say. They was hardish times when I was a nipper, but there were more people about, and more work done on the land.'

But Thomas's stock of information is almost inexhaustible, and I must take leave of him and his reminiscences without even touching upon his talent for repeating old ballads. 'I could tell you songs as would last all night,' he once said; and some of these I have taken down, but they must be reserved to another paper dedicated to old Thomas alone.

But perhaps the wild life of this place will appeal to some more strongly than its vanished past can do. If so, the time to see it at its best is undoubtedly June. Some of us have perhaps, as we walked along a crowded London street on a June day, contrasted that scene and its full tide of existence with some such country fields as those of this little township, at the same moment and under the same fierce sunlight. We think of London as a noisy place and of the wilderness as wholly quiet. Just the reverse seems to me to be the fact. In London all lesser sounds are lost, merged in one great monotonous roar of traffic: in the green wilderness there is a perplexity, a multiplicity of sound, but no one is lost or fused into a greater whole; on the contrary each little voice has its own place, each sound is accentuated, exaggerated—exaggerated until we almost think that we can hear 'the grass

grow and the squirrel's heart beat.' The chaffinch singing in the thorn-tree, with its shapely head towards the west wind, which is ruffling its gay feathers; the chiff-chaff with its two monotonous but beloved notes so redolent of spring; the willow wren's whistled imitation of the chaffinch's song; thrush, wildest of little poets, singing its very heart away in melody; blackbird, perhaps the dearest of all, with its 'boxwood flute' and quiet meditation on life, and love, and all things around him; and the most wholly joyous of all songs—that of the lark, a quivering speck against a quivering blue sky. Who can tell what ecstasy of happiness is in that soaring little heart as it sings as near to heaven as its wings can reach?

These are, I think, the commonest of our songsters; but even as I say this, I remember so many more who all have their part in the great chorus—yellow-hammers, linnets, pipits, tits of many kinds, and, not far off them, golden-crested wrens, with their sharp *tee-tee* ringing from among the many yew-trees which are a feature of this country. But why go on? This is mere cataloguing. Every hedge, every field, every yard of earth or of air is instinct with life and sound, if only insect life. Sound, sound, multiplied field after field; endless music on every side and 'soft eye-music' too; melodies, unheard but not the less sweet, which every fresh summer day brings with it; the glory of the grass, the glory of the mountain, the glory of the great wide sky, decked now with light as with a garment; glories of which the heart can never tire. And the very night, too, is eloquent. Before the thrushes and blackbirds have finished their evensong, their last liquid notes that close the eye of day, the owl is already chanting his dim part—long may he escape the pole trap at the edge of the wood! For, of all the sad sights in a sad world, there are few more sad than to see some beautiful wild thing hanging for long hours in patient misery, unrelieved by any hope but of death from a keeper, whose hereditary ignorance of the *amount* of mischief done by hawks and owls would be laughable if its effects were less sad. England is to become a waste wilderness for the sake of a few mere pheasants in the coverts. But *non ragionam di lor* . . . The note of the brown owl is a very musical one and is heard perpetually around here, sometimes beginning as early as four or five o'clock on a March afternoon. It does not at all resemble Shakspeare's 'Tu-whit, tu-who,' which the other poets have copied. Rather it is a long and somewhat tremulous 'who-oo.' After the owl comes on the night-jar, whirring his wheel under the oak tree; and the corncrake, wandering,

wandering, in the sweet dewy grass, and all night long repeating that harsh call of which we never weary and which is never harsh to us. And its enemy, the mowing machine, does not come into this hilly land. Perhaps if we are out 'when light on dark is growing,' we shall hear almost under our feet a sound which has been described as resembling the quacking of a hoarse duck, and after it a snuffing sound such as a dog might make. This is a hedgehog out for his evening walk, accompanied, most likely, by Mrs. Hedgehog. I do not know if his vocabulary is limited to these two sounds. The witch in *Macbeth* says, indeed, that 'thrice the hedgepig whined,' but I never heard of its doing so.

Have I so far only mentioned common birds and beasts? They are not the less loved because common.

The meanest things below,  
As with a seraph's robe of fire  
Invested, burn and glow—

if there is a real love of nature in his heart who sees and hears them. But this neighbourhood can boast of some creatures which are really rare in many parts of England. For a tract of country in which there is a river, a portion of real uncultivated mountain heath, a portion too of cultivated land, makes a happy hunting-ground for a naturalist; and such a happy hunting-ground is this. About 350 acres of the low hill opposite the mountain, of which I have already spoken, are surrounded by a ring fence, and consist of sheep pasture, dingles running down to the brook below, the site (hardly the ruins) of a little alien priory, forsaken as long ago as the reign of Edward IV., much brushwood, as well as better pasture fields. Here is a haunt—one of the few English haunts—of black game; not numerous enough for a drive, and yet sufficiently numerous for their call—that sound as if they were clearing their throats—to be familiar. It gives a pleasant wildness, a far-away character, to their surroundings. They roost in trees at night, and are more at home on their feet than on the wing; but when once put up, they fly straight and strong and rather high.

The stream is loved by dippers; but kingfishers are rare. I think the banks are too rocky, and perhaps the stream too rapid, for their mode of fishing. On the mountain there are ring-ousels in plenty. You can hear their sweet wild song there any spring day, and perhaps find one of their nests hidden away among the heather. And, best of all, here are curlews—we lay the accent on the last syllable in this part of the world. Your first experience of them will perhaps be when you are out on 'the mountain in

spring or autumn. If you hear the sound of a far-off whistle, like that of no other bird you ever heard, then look up, and high, high over your head you will see the beautiful creatures flying most probably in a wedge, and with a straight but rather slow flight. They are on their way to the sea if it is autumn; on their way from it if it is spring. They arrive here in March, and when they are settled in their summer haunts you will often hear their sweet tremulous whistle as they fly low over the mountain, and perhaps their other startled cry, which has been likened to that of the rare black woodpecker. The curlew is a handsome bird, varying very much in size, but some of them stand quite eighteen inches high. They lay their eggs on the ground and on hardly any nest; and like those of the pewit, they are arranged in a quatre-foil. Pewits are rare here. They prefer tillage to pasture land, but a few miles away their beautiful lonely cry is heard over every field. Woodcock and snipe abound, and not long ago I heard that one of the rarer solitary snipe had been seen. Some woodcock are said to remain here to nest.

As for four-footed beasts, 'the little red fox from his hole in the rocks' on the mountain, where hounds so rarely come, prowls down to the farms, and the men tell strange stories of his cunning and his depredations. But the silent badger, which is comparatively common here too, is a far more difficult beast for a terrier to tackle in his hold. Good Bewick, whose sympathy with all wild things was so far in advance of his time, never said a truer word than when he told us that the badger is harmless and inoffensive, and unless attacked it employs its formidable weapons of defence only for its support. 'As grey as a badger' is a proverb; and lately two white ones were, I am told, seen about here. I confess to a hopeless inability to tell a weasel from a stoat; one, or both, abound, and the cats often catch them and bring them into the houses. There is a good woman here who is proud of the exploits of her cats in catching 'honts (moles) or any vermin moving in the ground.' This same old body has the rare art of attracting birds and beasts to her, and last winter she had as many as five robins roosting in her little room at once. Her three cats, sleeping happily in front of the fire, did not molest the little visitors who came in under a flag of truce.

H. C. T.

## *The 'Peking Gazette' and Chinese Posting.*

PREVIOUS to the introduction under European auspices of the Chinese newspapers now daily circulated from Hong Kong and Shanghai, and of more recent years also, to a lesser extent, from Tientsin and Hankow, there was hardly any dissemination of news throughout the Empire, except that conveyed by the *Peking Gazette*, or, as the Chinese call it, the *Metropolitan Reporter* (*King-pao*). For many years past English translations of the more important documents issued to and published by the *Peking Gazette* office have been furnished, either in full or in the form of a digest, according to their weight and interest, by the leading Shanghai newspaper; and, moreover, all the native Shanghai newspapers, and some of the others, publish daily, *in extenso*, the original Chinese versions: in the case of interesting Imperial decrees or very important memorials from the Provinces, the chief organs of the Chinese press even obtain their information by telegraph from Peking. And thus it happens that the work of centralisation, which has in every sense largely developed since the European envoys settled in Peking thirty-five years ago, has been considerably facilitated and brought home to the Chinese mind; both foreigners and natives receive rapid, precise, and regular information of what goes on in the capital, and the mystery which, until a generation ago, enveloped the springs of Manchu government shows a gradual tendency to disappear.

But it must not be imagined that all Imperial decrees are issued for publication. Anything of a confidential nature, whether in the form of a decree, rescript, or memorial, is 'kept inside;' and there is no capital in the world where it is more difficult to purchase secret documents than Peking. But these documents, when they concern the general weal, are none the less transmitted for record or report to most of the viceroys and provincial governors, from whose offices it is often not difficult to obtain,

by purchase, copies of interesting documents. The local gentry, who like to be informed upon everything which concerns the interests of their caste in general and of their relatives holding office in particular, usually have a clerk or two in their pay, and these clerks are not slow to discover that some foreigners have similar and more liberally bestowed funds at hand for a like purpose. Besides this, Chinese officials themselves sometimes find it advantageous to obtain the publication in the native press of confidential documents; and, as this native press would soon be strangled to death without its European protection, they can easily disavow all responsibility by referring their censorious superiors to the foreign editor as the responsible person. Over and over again have the viceregal governments remonstrated with the consuls at Shanghai, and endeavoured to institute a sort of press inquisition; but at last they have come to perceive, on the one hand, that all such attempts are vain, and, on the other, that 'what is sauce for the goose is also sauce for the gander'—unpleasant publicity in one instance being compensated by desirable notoriety in another. Thus it comes that the *Shên Pao*, or *Shanghai Reporter*, has now become an acceptable organ even at Court, besides circulating all over the Empire, and, to a less extent, throughout Corea, Japan, Annam, Siam, and Burma; and it is as well-managed an organ as any European daily newspaper.

Yet the *Peking Gazette* has lost none of its importance; on the contrary, as the *Shên Pao* invariably prints the whole of it, the circulation of the older sheet has been enormously increased and popularised. The promotions and degradations, which, of course, present little of interest to foreigners, are scanned with avidity by the hungry provincial expectants; the latest news concerning the examinations is instantaneously telegraphed to Shanghai, and at once circulated for the information of the gaming fraternity, who make huge bets on the results, and, in the case of Canton, Hong Kong, and Macao, get up popular lotteries involving millions sterling a year in prize money. Foreigners anxiously look for the publication in the *Gazette* of decrees favouring missionaries, which documents are of little use if left to the saving grace of local proclamations issued by the provincial authorities. Budding censors, who usually commence their successes in public life by protesting against somebody or something (it does not much matter what so long as it 'goes down'), are delighted to see their names in print with the Imperial comments upon their effusions. For many years the words 'telegraph'

and 'newspaper' were studiously ignored by the Palace and by the provincial bureaux; it would have been almost as great an outrage to insert the word 'telegram' in an Imperial decree as to speak of the Empire Music Hall or bottled stout in a Queen's Speech; but now telegraphic decrees and telegraphic reports are the order of the day, and a general in Turkestan only the other week mentioned in his memorial that he was sending the good news of his victories to be published in the *Shên Pao*. Changes in China come slowly, at least to those who are eager for progress; but in this, as in other matters, the difference between 1896 and 1866 is almost as great at root, though not so apparent above ground, as in the case of Japan. The vast carcase of China is unmistakably moving.

There is a special bureau or public department at Peking which is charged with the duty of copying and delivering in the form of a *Gazette* such documentary information as may be given to it for that purpose by the Emperor's order or with the authority of the Privy Council. This information is grouped in three divisions, which may be thus enumerated: A. Court matters. B. Original decrees, rescripts, appointments, degradations, &c. C. Direct reports to the Emperor from the provincial governments. Under the first head appear the routine duties of the ministers in attendance, and the lists of presentations (if any) made by them. Two or three heads of departments are in attendance every eighth day until the whole twenty are exhausted, when the round begins again. The *Gazette* announces, for instance: 'To-day was the attendance day of the Board of Office and the Hanlin Academy; there were no presentations.' Besides the Boards of Revenue, Rites, Punishments, War, and Works, there are the Mongolian Superintendency, Household, Stud Office, Sacrificial Court, Clan Office, Board of Astronomy, Censorate, Banqueting Court, Court of Revision, Transmission Office, Education Office, Royal Mews, &c., &c. As in England, the Cabinet has no regular official organisation, but it meets the Emperor every morning before dawn, and is now, in many respects, practically one and the same thing as the Board of Foreign Affairs, which is a creation of 1860, and rather officious than official. The Inner Council is much like our Privy Council; its official existence survives, but its functions have to most intents been superseded by the Cabinet Council. In addition to the above administrative departments there are the Imperial Body Guard, Two Wings, and Eight Banners; these military departments also come in turn,

but take ten days, instead of eight, to exhaust; consequently their rotation varies in respect of the civilians. After the announcement concerning attendances, the *Gazette* usually goes on to enumerate the applications for furlough, sick leave, permission to visit parents' tombs, and so on. Then come the verbal applications for special appointments, and the list of persons nominated on extraordinary temporary duty; for instance: 'The Board of Revenue applies for a special auditor. His Majesty was pleased to nominate the Grand Secretary X.' Or, 'The War Office submits the propriety of appointing special examiners for the military status of competent armourer. His Majesty was pleased to name the Princes A. and B., the President C., and Messieurs D., E., and F. for this duty.' Next follows a list of special audiences accorded; thus: 'Special audiences granted to Li Hung Chang and to A., the ex-minister to Russia and Germany.' Finally, the movements of the Emperor are notified, just as with us; thus: 'His Majesty proposes to pass through the A. gate at 8 A.M. to-morrow, proceed to the B. audience chamber, and formally sanction the documents awaiting submission there. After this the Emperor will proceed by way of the C. court and the D. portal to the E. palace, and will there perform the appropriate rites for the day. His Majesty will present his respects to the Dowager-Empress on his way back, take a turn in the new steam-launch, quit the Lily Pond, and regain his private apartments by way of the F. garden and G. gate.'

The range of ground covered by the Imperial decrees is of course very wide. Yet there is considerable sameness and similarity. I have read nearly all the Imperial decrees published during the past twenty years, and I think I may safely say that out of a daily average of ten there is not one which is not worded in purely stereotyped fashion. The following are all routine decrees, varying only slightly according to special circumstances. In order to save space and avoid wearying the reader I have much curtailed them.

1. The worthy Viceroy X.Y.Z. of Sz Chwan began his career as an ordinary bachelor, gradually working his way through the various administrative ranks until he was entrusted with a province of his own. He had repeatedly solicited permission to retire, and both our Imperial mother and ourself had conferred presents of pills and ginseng upon him at various times. We now hear, alas! that he is no more. X.Y.Z.'s penalties during life are hereby cancelled. One thousand pounds are bestowed for funeral expenses, and the local officials will pay every respect to

the coffin as it passes through their jurisdictions. Prince A. will meet the procession outside Peking, and spread a Tibetan quilt upon the remains. Let X.Y.Z.'s son B. become a junior president; his eldest grandson C. will be presented when he comes of age. In this way do we delight to honour an upright and loyal servant.

2. Let X. become viceroy of Sz Chwan.

3. Let Y. replace X. as governor of Ho Nan, proceeding direct to his post without seeking our further instructions. Until he arrives, let Z. the treasurer act as governor.

4. During the past ten years China and the foreigner have learnt to know each other better, yet there are still districts where Christian missionaries are viewed with hostility. The viceroys and governors of provinces should circulate copies of the treaties throughout all subordinate local offices, and see that prefects and magistrates carry out our Imperial desire that in future distant men be treated with every kindness.

5. The Governor X. reports a number of incompetents. The Prefect A. is an opium sot and too fond of actors; the Magistrate B. is a fellow of low and mercenary spirit. Let each be reduced one grade. The Prefect C. is no fool, but he is getting old and feeble. Let him retire on his present rank. The Magistrate D. is simply an idiot. Let him take charge of the local education department instead.

6. The Governor A. reports the death of the Prefect of Canton. Let him select a successor from one of the available competent prefects in charge of any other town: let B. have the post thus vacated.

7. The remarks of the Censor X. upon the immoral tendencies of the age are not destitute of common-sense. In striving after virtue, we only follow the lead of our sacred ancestors of never-to-be-forgotten memory; still, it is possible that failure of our own may exercise a deleterious psychological effect upon the minds of men at large. In future let all viceroys and governors watch their own conduct more closely, with a view to propitiating Heaven's favour.

8. The Resident in Tibet reports that the soul of the defunct Dalai Lama has been found in the body of A., an infant of the peasant B. family. It must be remembered that, in consequence of an offence by C., his late Majesty commanded twenty-five years ago that no souls should be found for three generations in the district of D. It is presumed that the Resident has this com-

mand in his mind's eye, and that the B. family is untainted with local disability. If this be so, the finding of the soul is approved.

9. A man stopped our sedan-chair yesterday with a petition. Let him be handed over to the Board of Punishments whilst enquiry is made.

10. We yesterday received the benign commands of our imperial mother the Dowager to save our legs by riding in a litter instead of walking across the Lily Garden. Though we thought our body was fairly sound, still we must not forget our capacity as representative of all men under the sun. In future, at least when it is windy, let the litter be prepared.

11. Let A. be general at Foochow.

12. Eunuchs are at the best of times but the orts of men. Taking warning by the fate of the T'ang and Ming dynasties, we Manchus have never entrusted these menials with any important charges. The head eunuch A. appears to have used rude language to Li Hung Chang on the latter's declining to pay certain fees. Let him receive fifty blows with the stick, and let the iron tablet of rules suspended in the eunuch department be read out aloud to them all once a month.

13. The Viceroy of Hu Kwang reports the descent to the earth from the clouds of a green lizard, and the consequent sudden stoppage of the floods in nine districts. We are infinitely touched by this gracious evidence of the gods' intervention. The Academy has been ordered to compose a suitable aphorism for engraving on a gorgeous tablet. The Viceroy will proceed in full uniform, followed by the whole official body, to hang this tablet in the Moth's Eyebrows Hall, in order to prove to the local deity that we are not indisposed to requite his services.

14. When the eclipse of the moon takes place to-morrow, let the proper authorities set up the usual howls, and save the moon in due legal form.

15. Let the X. murder case be handed to the Governor of Kwang Si, who will duly summon all parties and witnesses, examine the papers, and endeavour to get at the real truth. Let the appellant be sent back from Peking to be at once confronted with the appellee.

Specimens of Imperial decrees and rescripts might be multiplied indefinitely, but the above are sufficient for illustration. Nos. 2, 3, 6, 11 occur almost daily, Nos. 5 and 15 at least once a week. The others occur at rare intervals. It rarely

happens that a decree appears couched in entirely new style, or treating of quite a fresh subject.

The area covered by reports from the Provinces is just as extensive as that occupied by decrees and rescripts. As a rule, confidential memorials are treated confidentially, but occasionally they are published in all their baldness, and viceroys and governors indulge in very unconventional language about each other before the Emperor. I remember in 1872-73 the Viceroy Liu K'un-yi (now at Nanking), when governor of Kiang Si, got into a mess with a local magnate then on a visit to Peking. The local magnate had written him private letters with a view to evading taxation on certain property. The Governor, in contradicting the magnate's slanderous statements, said: 'His motives must have been corrupt, for long before that I had half a dozen private letters from him on the subject from Peking.' The Emperor said: 'How came you to let them run into the half-dozen? When he wrote the first time, you knew he had no right to do so. Why did you not report him? He says you were hoping to make better terms with him.' The Governor rejoined: 'It is the custom for viceroys and governors to correspond with local men at Peking, and, though it may be wrong, I am not one of those who pretend to goody-goody perfection. I simply wished to oblige him as a local man; but when he asked me to let him off scot-free, I gave him a piece of my mind. Anyhow, no one can say I am corrupt in money matters; and even if I was such an idiot as to try and make terms, I am at least not such an idiot as to leave six letters on record, as he did.' This viceroy was totally fearless, and I subsequently had very close relations with him. He has innumerable faults which a censor might fairly denounce, but he is so honest and courageous that the Emperor cannot well forego his services.

Sometimes treasurers and judges, who as a rule only address the Throne on taking up and abandoning office, and on Imperial birthdays, may denounce their superiors, the viceroy or governor. This has happened several times at Canton: in one case they had the governor degraded for giving a feast during the time of Imperial mourning; and when I was there in 1875 the Manchu viceroy, Yinghan, was summarily removed for encouraging gambling, on the application of the Chinese governor and Manchu general. Very few high officials can write their own memorials, or care to do so if they can. Yet they are held severely responsible for any slips in grammar, etiquette, or tact which their

secretaries may make. Manchus always style themselves 'slave,' whilst Chinese use the word 'subject;' for some unexplained reason certain Chinese military officers also use the word 'slave.' The highest provincial official is the Manchu general (where there is one); the next the viceroy, whether Manchu or Chinese; or, if no viceroy, the governor. Memorials are in most cases returned in original, with the original rescript endorsed thereon; copies are made and kept at Peking, so that each side keeps the version it is responsible for, and tampering with documents is thus impossible.

Official despatches are conveyed through a service organised by the Board of War, and on arrival are placed in a locked box at the Transmission Office; a eunuch takes this box to the Emperor, who alone possesses the key. The Emperor sometimes endorses his minute at once, but usually he reserves his decision until the Cabinet officers appear, at 3 A.M. The Empress, when Regent, had a regular system of thumb-nail rescripts; not because she could not write, but because this method saved trouble. The Inner Council then instantly copies the reports, whilst the 'junior lords' of the Cabinet submit fair copies of the proposed decree. The Grand Secretariat is the depository for the copies of memorials and endorsements. Memorials are sent to Peking in flat wooden cases, fitted with spring locks, which can only be used once. A stock of them is periodically supplied by the Peking Board. The Emperor returns the original box, with the original document simply wrapped up, not locked, in it, and all old boxes and envelopes have to be ultimately returned respectfully to Peking, duly numbered. The couriers travel with the despatches strapped to the back, and are escorted by the official who sends the documents as far as the third inner gate; the grand central portal is then thrown open, and off rides the courier, to a salute of six guns. Ordinary letters go easily 'by post,' *i.e.* by comfortable stages of thirty miles a day. The order to 'go 130 miles (or 150 miles) a day' is merely formal, and simply means that all speed, without incurring extra expense, is to be made. On the rare occasions when 200 miles a day are ordered, the same courier is expected to travel even six days without stopping more than a minute or two at a time; three such successful rides entitle him to the lowest official button. The most rapid journey ever ordered is 260 miles a day, and the man who accomplishes it for long distances is pensioned for life. (Chinese pensions, however, tend to exiguity.) When Canton was taken by our troops, the news reached Peking in six days, and the reconquest of Kashgaria in 1878 took very little more to report. On the great western

high-road there are now 2,680 post-horses and 1,340 post-boys. Previous to the Yakoob Beg rebellion there were nearly three times these numbers, but the Kan Suh province has for long been somewhat disorganised.

To return to our reports. Each important document would be on the average quite as long as the whole of this paper, so that it will readily be seen that we cannot give full examples. As with the decrees, so with the reports,—many occur daily; others weekly, monthly, quarterly, or yearly. Daily ones—not daily from each province, but appearing almost every day—are such as propose promotions and transfers; report the rehearing of appeal cases; announce the despatch of funds to Peking; apply for the Imperial approval in cases of marked filial piety, and so on. But their nature can be best judged by the light of the decrees and rescripts, of which instances have been given above.

E. H. PARKER.

P.S.—Since writing the above, I have received a *Gazette* containing a very curious memorial from the Dalai Lama of Tibet, an exalted ecclesiastical functionary analogous to the Pope of Rome, except that the Manchu Emperors, whilst recognising his spiritual claims, insist upon his keeping to his proper temporal place.

‘Petty priest that I am, in obedience to the precedents followed by my predecessors, I descend from my mountain seat, and, having selected a propitious day, proceed to the Great Temple to hold a full choral service on all occasions upon which the territories subject to Tibetan rule are found free from temporal afflictions, with a view to somewhat relieving my loyal cares by offering devout prayers for the peace and long life of His Majesty the Emperor, and the tranquillity of the world in general. Thanks to the felicitous *ægis* of our Sacred Master, Tibetan territory is now free from any plague of sickness, and all remains at peace. Accordingly, my private vicar-general and preceptor has selected the 23rd of February, 1896, as an auspicious day upon which I, petty priest that I am, am to proceed in person, at the head of the whole ecclesiastical bodies of the three chief Lhasa temples, to the Great Metropolitan Temple, there to hold solemn service, and to offer up special prayers for our Sacred Master’s long life and prosperity, and for the welfare of his people.’

The above was received through K’wei-hwan, Manchu Resident in Tibet. An imperial rescript was received as follows: ‘Let the department concerned take due note.’ By the Emperor.

In view of the revolution now taking place in Tibet, the above official definition of the relations between the Buddhist Pope and the Emperor of China is interesting.

E. H. P.

## *The Princess Désirée.*

BY CLEMENTINA BLACK.

### CHAPTER IX.

FIVE gentlemen of Felsenheim sat in an upper chamber, hearing the slow tolling of the cathedral bell, and looking upon each other with countenances of some perturbation.

'If we only knew where she was!' said the young Count Ernst Von Eschler.

His neighbour, Colonel Hillers, grave, taciturn, and middle-aged, nodded.

'We know where the enemy is,' said Wolf von Perneck, in his gentle drawl. Von Perneck was always a little apathetic until the moment of actual emergency. The eager look which should have accompanied his observation flashed, not from his face, but from that of Conrad von Neustetten, who sat next him, a handsome reckless boy of hardly nineteen.

The fifth man, who was the acknowledged leader, was Waldemar von Adlersburg. He said nothing, and his face was calm.

'Do you know where she is?' Eschler asked him impatiently. He shook his head.

'Can't we fight for her without having her sitting by to look on?' Perneck asked, in the tone of a fashionable physician soothing an irritable patient.

Waldemar took from his pocket, and laid upon the table, various papers.

'With your permission,' he said, speaking in the full grave tones of a singularly noble voice, 'I will lay before you the precise state, as far as I know it, of our strength. I will then tell you——'

The door of the room was suddenly flung open. Hermann von Adlersburg, the younger brother of Waldemar, was taking his turn to keep guard in the ante-chamber. He it was who had thrown wide the door, and his was the voice which now announced: 'The Grand Duchess of Felsenheim.'

A fair-haired young woman, trimly but humbly clad, stepped lightly into the room. A young man followed, whose build and all his movements were out of accord with his peasant dress. The conspirators stared at the pair in silence.

The young woman, serenely lifting off her wig and bonnet, presented to their astonished eyes the cropped and curly head of the heiress of Felsenheim.

Instantly there was a cry of jubilation, and she stood the centre of homage and acclaim.

Ludovic, left outside the circle, felt it an enclosing barrier. Nobody, in the first moment, had eyes for him. It was she herself who, turning towards him, said: 'This, gentlemen, is M. de Saintré, who brought me boldly out of the castle in broad daylight, before the eyes of the guard, and to whose courage and coolness I owe it that I am here to-night.'

Eschler and Hillers, who knew De Saintré, stepped forward to greet him, and he was presented in form to the others. Hermann von Adlersburg was not included; he had closed the door upon his eagle face and resumed his watch.

'Let us sit down,' said the Grand Duchess, 'and let me hear the contents of those papers.'

They sat down obediently, and there was a moment of embarrassed silence. She looked at them interrogatively, then her face changed a little.

'I answer for M. de Saintré, as for myself,' she said proudly.

Ludovic saw or fancied the fall of a shadow on some of the faces.

Waldemar read aloud the papers; a procession of unknown names, some belonging to men and some to places, crossed the field of De Saintré's hearing. In the midst of these statements, an hour struck. Conrad von Neustetten rose quietly and went from the room, and, a moment later, Hermann von Adlersburg entered and took the vacant seat.

The Princess now and again put a quick question; her intent face seemed to review and balance every word.

'And what course of action,' she asked at last, 'do you advise?'

The question seemed a general one. Waldemar was in no haste to reply, and it was Hermann who spoke eagerly.

‘In my judgment, your Highness should go forth this very night, take possession of the town hall, and declare yourself Grand Duchess.’

“‘Take possession” is easily said,’ remarked Ernst von Eschler.

‘The troops from Kirschenwald and Langenau could be brought up—how soon?’ she asked.

‘In eight-and-forty hours.’

‘I suppose,’ she was looking at Waldemar for her answer this time, ‘no one knows what the Duke of Hohenstein really believes as to my whereabouts.’

‘He professes to think that your Highness has gone with M. de Saintré to join the Duke of Toulouse.’

‘There is no suspicion that M. de Saintré has not really gone?’

‘I believe, none at all.’

She ruminated.

‘There seem,’ she said at last, ‘to be two courses: either to act now, this hour, or to wait for some days without any sign at all. The Duke will think that if I am at hand I shall come forward at once. If three or four days go by, he will begin to think that I am really out of the country, and will be unprepared for a rising here.’

‘That is quite my opinion,’ said Waldemar, and De Saintré noticed that Hermann scowled.

‘The Grand Duchess might very fittingly make her first appearance at the Grand Duke’s funeral,’ Perneck remarked.

‘You are right, Count,’ the Princess answered eagerly.

‘We give them time to play the first card,’ murmured Colonel Hillers, speaking for the first time.

She gave a little nod, then her eyes travelled slowly round the circle, and she said gravely: ‘In such an enterprise there must be a leader, and the most experienced among us is the Count of Adlersburg. Will you undertake the responsibility, Count?’

Waldemar bowed silently.

‘Then I, for one,’ said she, ‘will be ready to obey your directions. Please instruct me; where do you propose to conceal M. de Saintré and myself?’

‘Your Highness has not been seen to come into this house?’

‘I believe not.’

‘Then it might be safest if you would consent to remain. My sister is here. Perhaps—perhaps your Highness would be willing to pass as her attendant?’

‘Certainly. And M. de Saintré?’

‘M. de Saintré must not, of course, be seen. Perhaps you also, Monsieur, would consent to pass for one of my sister’s household.’

‘Very willingly,’ Ludovic answered, foreseeing some further days, at least, under the same roof with the Princess Désirée.

He found himself a little nettled at the way in which these Germans took for granted that there was no active work for him. In the woods, in the hayloft, in the jostling streets of Hohenstein, he had been everything. Here and now he was nothing. The talk went on, but no one appealed to him; there were moments when the very sound of the German tongue revolted him, and when he seemed to himself immeasurably remote and alien. Again, there were moments in which the little dark head, the grave large eyes, and meditative lips, had all the sweet familiarity of use and wont, and were at one with himself, apart from all these babblers.

At last the talk came to an end. Waldemar arose, and begged the two fugitives to accompany him to his sister.

The widowed Princess of Waldeneck, born Amalia von Adlersburg, had returned, upon her late consort’s expulsion from his small but agreeable principality, to the land of her birth, and now spent most of her time, surrounded by an elaborate and courtly etiquette, in the ancestral castle of Adlersburg. At the moment, however, she chanced to be paying a hasty visit to Hohenstein, and to be occupying a suite of apartments in her brother’s town house. Such visits were always performed under a strict *incognito*, because the Prince Regent of Felsenheim did not receive her with royal honours.

To this lady’s presence the Grand Duchess and Ludovic were now conducted. She proved to be a tall and stately person, who united to the features of her brother Hermann a dignified insolence quite her own. Her curtsy to the Grand Duchess was of an incredible profundity; every crease of her stiff gown proclaimed the respect of the deposed Princess of Waldeneck for the reigning sovereign of Felsenheim. To Ludovic de Saintré she gave a slight inclination of the head, magnificently condescend-

ing, and Ludovic felt that there must have been enmity between some Adlersburg and some Aurillac, as long ago as the crusades.

Waldemar explained the position.

‘The Grand Duchess of Felsenheim,’ his sister said, in a deep voice, ‘can surely command what she will under the roof of an Adlersburg.’

The young Grand Duchess, with an air hardly less stately than the Princess of Waldeneck’s own, bowed an acknowledgment.

‘To-morrow,’ said she, ‘I must beg your Highness’s assistance in procuring mourning for me. For to-night, I think rest is the next thing.’

‘I will conduct your Highness at once to your room,’ said the elder lady.

They disappeared, and Ludovic turned at once to Waldemar.

‘Herr von Adlersburg, now that we are alone, let me say a word to you of my own position. I came here to please my family, and with only the vaguest notions of M. de la Ferronnière’s mission. As soon as I learned the nature of that intrigue I resolved to have no hand in furthering it, and seized the first opportunity to inform the Princess of it. I am in no sense bound—far from it—to the existing French Government. I am perfectly free, and it is my very earnest desire to be actively serviceable to the cause of the Grand Duchess.’

‘You have been serviceable to it already, M. de Saintré, in a very high degree, and every loyal Felsenheimer owes you a debt of gratitude. For the moment, however, you will no doubt see how important it is that you should remain in concealment, and I am sure that you will not permit any natural impatience to blind you to that necessity.’

Ludovic had the sensations of a reluctant schoolboy put upon his honour by a discerning pedagogue. He carried his discontent to his couch, where it abode with him, mitigated a little by the day’s memories, and by the touch of a silken handful of curls.

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## CHAPTER X.

LUDOVIC sat next day copying papers in the light of a carved mediæval window. Behind him, at a large table, sat the Princess of Waldeneck and the Grand Duchess. The table had been occupied during the morning by innumerable samples of black

stuffs. This afternoon the Grand Duchess sat actively engaged with her needle, and surrounded by billows of blackness. There were details indicating, in the code of the Court milliner, a severity of family affliction which it was judged dangerous to order from any dressmaker or to entrust to any servant. As the ladies sewed they talked, or rather the Princess of Waldeneck talked, and the Grand Duchess gave an answer whenever civility absolutely demanded.

'It is one great advantage for a female sovereign,' the elder lady remarked, 'that she has the opportunity of permanently securing a real helper for her country and herself.'

She paused. The young female sovereign addressed made no observation, and the oracle continued.

'A prince can at the best secure to himself by marriage allies and family connections. A princess can secure a partner for all her cares of state, at once her prime minister and her commander-in-chief.'

'Such a paragon is not always available,' said Désirée.

The Princess preserved a significant silence, and Ludovic, compelled to overhear every word, found it difficult to maintain impartial feelings towards Waldemar von Adlersburg.

'To a woman of royal mind,' the Princess presently continued, 'it must be a great joy thus to strengthen her throne.'

'Is it not true, however,' said Désirée, 'that women rulers have in fact more often weakened than strengthened their position by their marriages?'

The Princess drew herself up.

'There have been fools,' she said severely, 'even upon thrones.'

'And Queen Elizabeth of England, who passes for about the most successful, wouldn't marry at all. I was always taught that that was a great mark of wisdom in her.'

Désirée spoke slowly and smoothly, poising her head sideways to observe the effect of her work, and appearing more absorbed in that than in the conversation.

The Princess hesitated a moment.

'Queen Elizabeth, yes,' she said. 'While she lived, that did very well; but there's the question of succession. Her enemy's son succeeded her.'

There was a brief pause.

'Here, in Felsenheim,' the Princess impressively resumed, 'the sons of the Duke of Hohenstein would succeed you. Can your Highness doubt that your subjects would reckon upon it, and make their court to them even in your Highness's lifetime?'

Why, the knowledge is enough to paralyse any efforts on your behalf.'

'The question,' said the Grand Duchess, 'will undoubtedly have to be considered if ever I am firmly established on the throne. At the moment, and in the midst of this'—she pointed to the sable array before them—'any public step would hardly be decent.'

'No, oh no! certainly not. But it is always well to consider.'

Désirée appeared to follow this advice, for she remained some two or three minutes silent, and then said, in a voice of innocent discovery:

'I might marry my eldest cousin, Ferdinand; he is not quite three years younger than I am.'

The face of the lady of Waldeneck was hidden from Ludovic, but he heard the creaking of her silks as she drew herself up in her chair, and it was a full quarter of an hour before she spoke again.

Not once that day was Ludovic alone with the Grand Duchess, not once was there the possibility of a confidential word between them. He sat by silent, a well-conducted secretary, while Waldemar made her a long report. He learned that the funeral was fixed for the ensuing Tuesday, and that the Duke of Hohenstein had publicly and officially despatched a courier to his niece at Paris. No active movement was to be made until after the funeral. Three long days of dulness stretched immeasurable before him. But at dusk that evening an unexpected relaxation came.

Walking up and down the covered balcony, he was joined by Wolf von Perneck.

'You did not remember me last night, M. de Saintré,' said he, 'but I remembered you. I met you last Sunday at a supper of the Duke of Hohenstein's guard.'

'I am afraid,' said Ludovic, 'that my anxiety to learn the opinions of others, and to conceal my own, made me a little unobservant of the company.'

'There were boisterous spirits, too,' said Von Perneck, 'who overshadow the slow of speech; and my ignorance prevented my taking part in the discussion of Mlle. Lisette.'

'Mlle. Lisette,' De Saintré returned with some heat, 'was the Princess's maid, and her messenger to me.'

Perneck nodded slowly.

'You played your part very well,' said he.

'I can assure you I played it with very little enjoyment.'

Perneck nodded again.

'I envy your position,' he said after a moment.

Ludovic stopped short, interrogative, a little ruffled, ready enough to relieve the whole day's irritation by a quarrel.

'You are the only one among us,' Wolf proceeded, in his slow, placid voice, 'who is totally unsuspected by the other side.'

Ludovic listened, open-eyed.

'You will never be employed, however,' the calm voice went on. 'The Adlersburgs will not give the *beau rôle* to you—or, indeed, to any other man. It is much if they do not fight each other for it.'

'Surely Count Waldemar is honest——'

'Oh, quite! But he means to be the saviour of this throne himself. And as for Hermann'—he paused a little. 'Hermann thinks he loves the Princess—the Grand Duchess I should say. There will be trouble, and perhaps tragedy, if she marries Waldemar.'

'Does she think of that, do you suppose?'

'Who knows what she thinks? She is a brave soul, and can keep her own counsel.'

They stood leaning over the balcony, looking out on the flagged courtyard. Perneck drew a long breath, and lifted his elbows from the balustrade. They paced the balcony in silence once or twice.

'I like that little Princess,' said Perneck abruptly. 'She is brave and clear-sighted; she has the stuff of a man in her, and I should like her to have a man's chance. I want her to be king here, not Waldemar von Adlersburg, though I own that he would be a better king than one in a thousand.'

'How would the marriage be accepted by the Grand Duchy at large?'

'Of course *we* should be divided. That part of the nobility which hangs together with the Adlersburgs would hope to gain by it. And, of course, those who have always rather envied the Adlersburgs would resent it. And, of course, any marriage would strengthen her position by setting up a barrier against the Hohensteins—and there are such a lot of Hohensteins,' he added pensively.

Again they made their sentinel walk in silence.

'Do *you* want to see her marry Waldemar?' Perneck asked softly and languidly.

Ludovic felt the blood rush to his face in the darkness. There was a perceptible pause.

‘No,’ he said briefly.

Perneck made no observation.

‘I have promised obedience to Waldemar,’ the gentle voice began again presently. ‘I am going to keep it—in the letter. But if’—his voice grew slower and slower—‘if any one else who is not so bound should take any rash step which showed any chance of succeeding, my obedience would not deter me—the step being once inevitably taken—from doing everything to help its success. And you, M. de Saintré, unless I am greatly mistaken, are a man of courage and resolution.’

Ludovic made no answer. The possibility had naturally occurred to him that he was merely being sounded in the interests of Waldemar. But he was not at the moment particularly in love with prosperity for himself, and cared little enough whether he lost or retained the favour of this Felsenheim nobleman. In no case could Felsenheim be an abode for him when once Désirée was safely crowned and married.

On the other hand, what Perneck said had truth in it. There was, or rather there might be, an opportunity to serve her once more, and even more signally. It was with happier thoughts that he awaited the dawning of Sunday morning, and looked back with amazement upon the Sunday a week before, when the Princess’s parrot had not yet begun to be taken ill.

The well-regulated household of Adlersburg went forth to church next morning, but the secretary and sempstress of the Princess of Waldeneck remained at home, being, as it was understood, of the Lutheran persuasion. Ludovic sat alone in the recess of a great window looking out upon a garden, and meditating a slowly shaping scheme. A light step came behind him, and he saw the Grand Duchess. She held out her hand with a kind smile.

‘At last, my friend,’ she said, ‘here is a little holiday for us.’

She sat down on the stone window seat, and motioned him to sit by her. She leaned her dark head against the carved stonework; she was looking pale, he thought, and weary.

‘Oh, M. de Saintré,’ said she, ‘do you wonder that the Waldeneckers turned out the husband of the Princess Amalia?’

He smiled and shook his head.

‘It would hardly be worth while, would it, to get rid of the Baroness von Kirschenau in order——’ She stopped. ‘I am

ungrateful,' she said, changing her tone. 'And, moreover, I am wasting time. Now the house is empty it is safe to go into the garden. Will you come with me, brother Franz?'

'I am at your orders,' he answered joyfully.

They went down, and strolled slowly along a shady walk.

'Oh, the sweet air!' said the Grand Duchess. 'Is it indeed only two days ago that we sat in Felix's tree? Do you not feel as if you had been a week in prison?'

'A month,' said De Saintré.

'Oh!' said the Princess, suddenly raising her arms, 'I must get my wings, I must get my wings!'

Ludovic said nothing. Her cry seemed to open a door, through which he saw all at once what he could do to set her free. He saw, too, with a sweet and vivid perception, that to no other person in that house—perhaps to no other person in the world—would she have suffered that outcry to escape her. 'If things were otherwise,' his heart whispered, 'if things were only otherwise, she might have loved me.' The temptation to utterance was almost overwhelming. Waldemar's suit was being pressed, and it was bitter indeed to stand by silent. Perhaps a word of real love, such as sounds but seldom in the atmosphere of thrones, might startle her awake. He held himself back, however, and the word remained unspoken.

'Your Highness,' he began presently, but she stopped him.

'It is one advantage,' she said, 'of this disguise that we may speak without court forms. You know that to you they are meaningless.'

He was conscious of a vague inner protest, for indeed he was ready enough to yield to her the forms of homage, but the enterprise of explaining this was too dangerous and difficult.

'Well?' she said, waiting for the speech which she had interrupted.

'I had a petition to make.'

She smiled upon him a full bright smile.

'Well?'

'It is that if I were to be imprisoned or to lose my life in what might seem like an attempt to betray you, you should believe that I never failed for a moment in faith to you.'

She paused, her clear large eyes fixed full on his face.

'M. de Saintré,' she said, her voice deepening; and she stopped. To Ludovic the pause was anguish.

'This is not your country,' she said, 'nor your cause. Why should your life be risked for it? France may ask it of you one day; France has the right, but not I.'

'You have not answered me,' Ludovic said in a low voice.

'Answered you? Whether I doubt you? Oh, M. de Saintré, do you take me for a stone? The sun in heaven is not a surer thing to me than your truth. But—but leave Felsenheim to fight its own battles.'

'You said on Friday that there would never be a time when you did not need real friends.'

'Yes, and that is why I don't want my real friends killed,' she flashed back upon him.

They had come to an old stone bench. She sank down upon it. Ludovic stood, looking at her.

'What is Felsenheim, after all?' she said, letting her hands drop.

Then a temptation assailed De Saintré. Why should she be left here to struggle? Why not urge her to give it up, to come back with him, to be Duchess of Aurillac, a happy woman, peaceful and beloved? But his courage failed him. He found himself afraid to face the waking up of the soldier in her, the scorn with which she would reject a proposal to desert her post. The demon therefore whispered another suggestion. Why not tell her that if she failed, if Felsenheim were dragged from her by the grim Friedrich Karl, there would still be his love and that place waiting for her? But he perceived in that the meanness, the parade of a conditional generosity, the implicit petition for a reward if she succeeded.

What he did say was: 'That is a question which the Prince Amadeus will not ask when he hears the first trumpet.'

He sat down on the stone bench a little away from her, resisting his immense desire to touch her.

'It is not Felsenheim for you, but you for Felsenheim,' he ventured to say.

She looked at him. Some thought trembled on her lips and died unspoken.

'I know,' she said briefly.

Her face was very grave.

'You will not go away to do anything dangerous without warning me?'

'No.'

'And if—and if—— I promise you that if I gain my Grand Duchy I will rule it as you would be glad to see it ruled. I believe that gives you more pleasure than anything else I could say.'

'It gives me very great pleasure,' Ludovic answered. 'But, indeed, you are taking things too seriously. I have the fullest hope of sitting at your coronation feast. But if not, the next best thing is to have helped to bring it. What! will *you* think it a hard lot for a man to be killed in a good cause?'

'I think all lots are hard that are worth choosing. At least, M. de Saintré, do not fall into rashness, which, you know, is bravado, and therefore vulgar, and quite unfit for a descendant of the crusaders.'

He followed her lead, eager to leave the perilous borderland of half-confidences. 'For that matter, I suppose nine men in ten are descendants of the crusaders.'

'I will not be corrupted by your republicanisms, M. de Saintré. Come, let us go quite round the garden by way of this quiet avenue, and then back into the house. The Princess of Waldeneck will be home very soon.'

They walked on.

'Do you know,' said she, 'I have thought of a really good plan. It is to marry my cousin, Ferdinand, to Waldemar von Adlersburg's daughter.'

'Daughter!'

'Did you not know he had a daughter?'

'I did not think him married.'

'He is a widower. Ludmilla must be nearly fourteen, and Ferdinand, I think, is seventeen. All Felsenheim owes much to Count Waldemar, and may owe more. It would please him to see his daughter Grand Duchess.'

'But would it be well looked upon if the heir of the Grand Duchy married a lady not of royal descent?'

The question was not altogether candid; he had the father in his thoughts rather than the daughter.

'But she is of royal descent. They were independent sovereigns till Frederick the Great turned them out. And as to descent, they trace direct from Charlemagne. There is no nobler family in Europe. And few nobler men,' she added dispassionately, 'than Count Waldemar.'

Ludovic made a vigorous effort to say something just and generous, but his jealousy made too strong a resistance, and he only succeeded in holding his tongue.

They hardly spoke again.

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## CHAPTER XI.

IN the afternoon there was a meeting of the six leaders. Ludovic had not been invited to attend it, but when it had been sitting a few minutes Von Perneck came to summon him.

'The Grand Duchess asked for you,' he informed him.

De Saintré followed obediently, and sat silently observant. Especially was his mind occupied by the Adlersburg brothers. Hermann's was the head of the nobler birds of prey, proud, swift, keen, and ruthless. The remote progenitor from whom the 'Eagle-mount' was named must surely have had the same profile. Waldemar, like enough to his brother for easy recognition, was one step nearer the normal. The lines and masses were squared and straightened, the whole form a shade or two heavier. In no detail was the difference striking, but it sufficed, on the whole, to make Waldemar's the head of a born leader.

'To-morrow evening, then,' said Waldemar, 'your Highness will remove to the house opposite to the cathedral. It is already being quietly filled with picked soldiers. Von Perneck will take command there. On Tuesday, at ten minutes to twelve, I propose to present myself at the Town Hall, carrying with me an order written and signed by your Highness's own hand, and instructing the officer in command to attend your Highness instantly with his regiment as a guard of honour. If he obeys, and I think he will, Colonel Hillers will, during the ceremony, take possession of the town hall; and, on leaving the cathedral, your Highness will take the royal carriage used by the Duke of Hohenstein on arrival, and drive immediately to the town hall, bringing the Duke with you if possible.'

The Grand Duchess listened gravely.

'Yes,' she said, 'I think it promises well. How if the officer refuses to come?'

'Hillers and I attack him in overwhelming force while the funeral proceeds.'

'Yes,' said Désirée again. 'Who is in command there?'

'Freiherr von Emsen.'

'Oh yes, I think, in that case, he will obey. Herr von Eschler takes charge of the north city gate; Herr von Neustetten joins the Langenau contingent in the forest. Good. And your brother, what post does he take?'

'I remain where your Highness remains,' said Hermann fiercely.

She looked at him with a curious remoteness.

'Have you ordered that?' she asked, after a moment, of Waldemar.

'I have permitted it,' said Waldemar.

Ludovic saw the flame leap to Hermann's face, and saw the words of anger arrested on his very lips by the stern gaze of the Grand Duchess. He remembered the words of Von Perneck, 'There will be trouble, and perhaps tragedy.'

'And M. de Saintré?' Waldemar said doubtfully, after a moment. Waldemar was always scrupulous to mark the position of Ludovic as a guest over whom he had no jurisdiction.

'M. de Saintré,' the Grand Duchess replied promptly, 'had better undertake no command, not because he is unequal to it, but because he is unknown to those who would be under him.'

Waldemar nodded grave assent.

'Perhaps,' said Wolf von Perneck, 'M. de Saintré will consent to serve with me. I shall have need of an adequate lieutenant.'

'I shall be very willing,' said Ludovic.

'So be it, then,' said Waldemar.

The meeting over, Perneck put his arm through that of his new officer, and led him away to a small high turret, whence a great part of the town was visible. There at the narrow windows he expounded the whole scheme. Ludovic looked, and listened, and understood.

'But the odds,' he remarked, 'are heavy against us.'

'They are,' said Perneck.

The two men looked at each other. Von Perneck smiled, and neither at that time said anything further.

Monday was a day of rain and of distant thunder. In the town, workmen were busy affixing black draperies; in the house, the Grand Duchess and the Princess of Waldeneck sewed assiduously at yards of black. Over the whole province lay a breathless cloud of suspense.

About eight o'clock in the evening, the Swiss sempstress of the Princess made a modest removal in a hired conveyance to her new quarters, taking with her a trunk of dimensions suited to her supposed station, and the French secretary, her brother.

As they jolted through the stony street, Ludovic said, 'I promised to tell you before I took any dangerous step. I am about to take it to-night.'

She sat absolutely silent; but presently, when the vehicle stopped, she caught his hand and pressed it hard.

The driver, who concealed under a large coat and a formless hat the person of Perneck, alighted and opened the house door. The Grand Duchess passed in. Wolf and Ludovic lifted down the trunk and followed her, and another man came from within, mounted the box, and drove away.

The Grand Duchess went to her apartment, where Lisette was waiting for her.

Von Perneck and De Saintré went into a little room on the ground floor. De Saintré took from his pocket a letter and laid it before his captain. It ran thus :

‘Dear Kurt,—I am back in Hohenstein, and waiting to see you. The Princess Désirée is neither in France nor in Frankfort. She is here. If the Prince Regent will trust himself to me alone, I will undertake to bring him to her. But I could not undertake to introduce a second person. You will, I am sure, understand that I am running great personal risk in this matter. I shall trust to the future ruler of Felsenheim to repay me.

‘LUDOVIC DE SAINTRÉ.’

‘You propose to carry that yourself, at once?’ said Perneck.

‘With your permission.’

‘By all means.’

He reached down a cloak and a sword.

‘It is a bare chance,’ said he. ‘There’s no German living who could induce Friedrich Karl to walk into that trap. And see here, De Saintré, if you find you have to lie, lie boldly. If the unpleasant leap has to be taken, it is a pity to miss it by hesitation on the brink.’

‘I will do my best,’ said Ludovic, buckling the sword-belt.

He went out into the wet and noisy cathedral square, and in five minutes was at the entrance of the Duke of Hohenstein’s palace.

He handed his note to a porter, bidding him have it delivered instantly.

A minute or two later, Kurt von Kleist came flying down the wide staircase. ‘It is you!’ he cried. ‘Come with me at once.’

He hurried De Saintré into a little bare room, containing no single object which had not a military purpose.

‘Is it true?’ he cried. ‘How did you find out? Tell me all about it.’

'Kurt,' said Ludovic sternly, 'you are wasting precious time. Take that letter instantly to the Duke. To-night I can take him to the Princess; to-morrow I may not be able.'

Kurt, a little abashed, departed.

Returning with a grave face, he led De Saintré to the presence of the Duke of Hohenstein.

Friedrich Karl, wearing his usual uniform, was sitting before his writing table, in a room hardly larger than Von Kleist's, and almost as bare. He fixed his hard eye on Ludovic, and waved his hand to Kurt, who withdrew.

'Now, M. de Saintré,' said the Duke, tapping the paper before him with impatient fingers, 'is this true?'

'Absolutely true,' answered Ludovic.

'How do you know?'

'I have been acting as French secretary to one of the conspirators.'

'To whom?'

'To the Princess of Waldeneck. Her Highness the Princess Désirée has been staying with her.'

'So? Is she with her now?'

'No.'

'Where is she?'

'I have taken an oath not to say.'

'An oath? Fool! Tell me where she is.'

'How could your Highness believe me if I were to break this oath?'

'But you say you will take me to her?'

'If your Highness commands.'

'Alone?'

'Alone.'

'May one of my guards follow, to give an alarm if I stay too long?'

'Yes, Kurt von Kleist.'

'Why he, rather than another?'

'Another if your Highness wills. But I warn your Highness that the party for her Highness the Princess is stronger than perhaps your Highness guesses. Even your own guards are not all to be trusted.'

The Duke fell into silence.

'Will you hold yourself ready, sir,' said he, 'if a sufficient escort is provided you, to set out with the Princess, this very night perhaps, for Frankfort? The Duke of Toulouse is still at Frankfort, I presume?'

'I believe so.'

'Well, will you be ready?'

De Saintré paused a moment.

'If a sufficient escort is provided, I will be ready,' he answered.

The Duke rose and opened the door.

'Von Kleist!' said he. Von Kleist came in. 'You will attend me, immediately. We will go out by the private gate. When I enter a house, you will stand and watch. If I do not return in twenty minutes, you will follow these orders.'

He wrote a few hasty lines and handed them to Von Kleist. Ludovic had a conviction, strong as if he had read them, that they contained an instruction not to wait so long as twenty minutes.

The three men passed out through the garden of the palace, where, though the actual rain was over, drops were falling slowly from the wet bushes upon the wet path. Beyond the garden, all the pavements were wet and the lamplight was reflected from muddy pools in the roadway.

'Go first, M. de Saintré,' said the Duke.

Ludovic paced on, hearing the double step behind him.

Opposite to the house in the cathedral square he paused.

'Is it here?' said the Duke.

'It is here.'

'Wait in the cathedral porch,' said the Duke; and Von Kleist drew back.

De Saintré struck thrice upon the door of the house, and it was opened by a man muffled in a large coat, and wearing a hat pulled over his brows.

'Friends!' said Ludovic, and began to mount the stairs.

At a door on the second floor he paused, knocked, and, receiving no answer, entered. The room was empty. He crossed it, the Duke following, and noiselessly opened a door into a room beyond.

The Princess Désirée was sitting here alone in her plain black dress. She started up in genuine astonishment.

'What?' she cried.

'The Duke of Hohenstein,' De Saintré said, 'has come to see your Highness.'

'You can leave us, sir,' said the Duke.

De Saintré did so, and rushed downstairs to Perneck.

'Von Kleist is waiting,' he cried, 'in the cathedral porch. He must be secured.'

'It is done,' returned Perneck calmly; 'I watched you coming. He is safely stowed. Have you left the Grand Duchess alone? Let us go up. He is capable of shooting her.'

They hurried up.

'Now go in,' said Perneck. 'Tell her I am asking to see her. I will have the outer room filled with soldiers.'

De Saintré went into the room. Uncle and niece were standing opposite each other, speaking quietly enough. The Duke turned and glared at him.

'The Count von Perneck craves permission to speak to your Highness,' said Ludovic to the Grand Duchess.

The Duke's hand went to his sword-handle.

'I will go to Herr von Perneck,' said Désirée, and moved towards the door, but in an instant the Duke's sword was out and barred the way.

'You don't leave this room,' he cried.

The Grand Duchess stood her ground. Ludovic's sword was out too, and he stood at her side, but one step nearer the Duke.

'Friedrich Karl, Duke of Hohenstein,' said the Grand Duchess, 'I command you, as your Sovereign, to put up your sword and to stand back from that door.'

The Duke of Hohenstein laughed.

She lifted a little silver whistle hanging at her waist, and blew a sharp blast. Instantly there was a rush of feet, and the door was flung violently open. The Duke, however, had sprung forward, De Saintré's sword had leapt up to meet his, and the two men were in deadly conflict.

The Grand Duchess stood perfectly still, not uttering a sound. In a moment all was over. The Duke, disarmed, was in the hands of the soldiers, and De Saintré leaned against the table, a thin trickle of blood running from his sleeve.

'Hurt?' said Von Perneck, coming up to him.

'Nothing, a trifle,' said Ludovic. This answer seemed addressed rather to Désirée, whose eyes were upon him.

She, drawing herself together, turned to the Duke:

'Your Highness will no doubt wish,' said she, 'to attend your father's funeral to-morrow. A carriage shall be at your disposal, and Count Waldemar von Adlersburg shall attend you in it. After the ceremony I shall take up my residence at the Town Hall until the grand-ducal palace here in the town is ready to receive me. You will remain for the present with me at the Town Hall, in order to show how unfounded are any rumours of a desire on your

Highness's part to act in opposition to the lawful sovereign of Felsenheim. For to-night the accommodation we can offer your Highness is, I fear, somewhat scanty. Herr von Perneck, however, will do his best, and ten soldiers will replace your guard in personal attendance on you. Herr von Perneck, will you conduct his Highness to his apartment ?'

The Duke paused a moment to address to Ludovic de Saintré a curse, and the title of traitor, and departed, respectfully surrounded by his gaolers.

The Grand Duchess drew up a chair.

'Sit down, M. de Saintré,' said she in her gentlest tones. She came and stood by his shoulder. 'Take off your coat and let me see how much your arm is hurt.'

'Oh, no, it is really trifling; I'll get it bandaged by-and-by, but it is only the left arm. I shall be able to fight all the same.' She touched his right hand with a shy finger.

'You saved my life,' she murmured.

'Oh, no,' said Ludovic again. 'He would not have killed you.'

'I am not sure,' she said; and Perneck here reappearing, she turned eagerly to him:

'Count, M. de Saintré is wounded. Will you see that his wound is properly looked to, and then come and tell me yourself how serious it is?'

'It isn't serious at all,' Ludovic declared.

He stood up, lifting his left arm with a little difficulty, and a tiny red pool remained on the table-cover. He looked at it with apology.

'I ought to have held my hand in my handkerchief,' he said.

The Grand Duchess looked at it too.

'Yours is the first blood shed in my quarrel,' she said, and Ludovic felt his scratch ridiculously overpaid.

The cut was neither wide nor deep; a strip of plaster supplied the necessary surgery, and the medical counsel went no further than a recommendation to keep quiet for that night, and to refrain from wine.

The Grand Duchess, when she had heard this comfortable report, inquired whether word had been sent to Waldemar of the Duke's capture.

The arrival of Waldemar himself gave him her answer.

'You have heard of M. de Saintré's exploit, Count?' said the Grand Duchess.

He bowed gravely.

You knew of this beforehand, Perneck?' said he.

'I knew,' said Perneck.

'It would have been becoming to ask my sanction,' said Waldemar firmly, but with no tone of resentment.

Perneck discreetly forbore any reply, and they went on to discuss the morrow's arrangements, which were all thrown out of gear by this new turn of affairs.

*(To be continued.)*

## *At the Sign of the Ship.*

MAN, being reasonable, must get drunk,' says the poet, and the advocates of 'temperance,' as they oddly call it, often contrast the convivial habits of man with the asceticism of the lower animals. But don't animals get drunk? The following case of intemperance in birds occurred under my own eyes, and under the bridge over the Lochy, below the Ben Nevis Long John Distillery. That establishment disgorges into a burn a quantity of refuse, no doubt alcoholic. When we crossed the bridge in the morning to fish, the ducks from the farm opposite were behaving in a drunk and disorderly manner—flying, beating the water, diving, spluttering, and greedily devouring the stuff from the distillery. Their antics were funny, but vulgar. By two o'clock we found the ducks sleeping off the effects of their debauch. We wakened them, and they all staggered eagerly to a bucket of water, from which they quenched the torments of thirst. A small sea-bird behaved in a still more deplorable way. He slowly drifted down the Lochy from the fatal intoxicated burn, nor could pebbles judiciously thrown at him induce him to take the wing. He tried to dive, making efforts comic and unsuccessful. After drifting through the bridge, I regret to say that he returned to the burn and 'took a cup of kindness yet,' getting all the more intoxicated, and drifting back in a yet more deplorable condition. What a lesson, we said, is this to mankind, who, after all, need not speak of their boasted reasonableness! The wild and tame things of stream and ocean are as unwise as we.

\* \* \*

Burns denied that he was the author of *Auld Lang Syne*, which, he said, was traditional. In its current form, no doubt, Burns did write the song, which, however, existed in a variety of other versions one of them Jacobite. I offer a few stanzas, and

the critical reader (if he does not know any better) may determine, by internal evidence, which verse is genuine. The singers are obviously exiles in the Royal Scots, or Lord Ogilvie's regiment,

\* \* \*

Though now we take King Lewie's fee,  
And drink King Lewie's wine,  
We'll bring the King from ower the sea,  
As in auld lang syne.  
For we hae fought the English loons,  
Frae Garry to the Rhine,  
Frae Falkirk to the field o' Val,  
In auld lang syne.

The Duke may wi' the devil drink,  
And wi' the deil may dine,  
But Charles 'll dine in Holyrood,  
As in auld lang syne;  
For He who did proud Pharaoh crush,  
And save auld Jacob's line,  
Shall speak to Charlie in the bush,  
Like Moses lang syne.

\* \* \*

For a good blood-curdling book, let me recommend one little known to amateurs, *News from the Invisible World*, Milner & Sowerby, Paternoster Row, London, s.a., by T. Ottway. The author cites from *The Monthly Magazine* (no date given) in an article on 'The Native Police in New Holland,' the famous Paramatta story. One Fisher, a settler, disappeared, and his station was managed by a servant who had been a convict. One day, *late on Saturday night*, a neighbour saw Mr. Fisher 'a-sitting on a gate,' or rather, a railing. The neighbour shouted to Fisher, who walked away. Fisher's assistant had the assurance to declare that Fisher had been drinking in the nearest town! A native policeman, named Sam, was called in. He examined the railing where Fisher had perched, found a stain, sniffed at it, 'and at once declared it to be *white man's blood*.' Monsieur Le Coq could not have rivalled this acuteness on the part of Samuel. Sam then ran to a pond, scooped off the scum, and (enlightened by cannibal experiences in his unconverted state) cried '*Whits man's fat!*' Next he sped to a coppice, bored in it with a ramrod, and finally cried '*Whits man here!*' So there was poor Fisher, with a fractured skull,

The ex-convict was tried and condemned, on 'circumstantial evidence,' at Sydney. In a famous Highland case—the murder of a sergeant—the accused escaped, just because the sergeant's ghost had given information. They were not so particular at Sydney, and the condemned was hanged, after making confession. He had killed Fisher, and had at first hidden the body in the pond, though afterwards he dug it up and buried it. Now, does any Australian archæologist know whether a report of this trial exists in the archives of Sydney?

\* \* \*

The celebrated tale of the sea-captain, who saw a stranger writing 'Steer North-west' in his cabin, steered north-west, and rescued a shipwrecked crew, is anticipated by the case of Captain Thomas Rogers, of *The Society*, bound for Virginia, in 1694. Here Mr. Rogers's slumbers are frequently disturbed by a 'thing' which bids him 'turn out and look abroad,' and by a voice which bids him 'heave the lead,' whereby the captain's life and vessel were saved from imminent destruction. The captain's own evidence is cited, but Mr. Ottway neglects to mention his author.

\* \* \*

A 'threefold dream' is given: a lady, her sister at a distance, and her father, living not far off, all dreamed that a certain serving man was about to cut her throat. The lad was found in her room with a knife, and confessed his intention. 'On this he was totally dismissed without delay.' But I know a fivefold dream: five members of a family, three at home, two at a distance, all dreamed, on the same night, that their pug dog, Zulu, had gone mad. But Zulu never did go mad, living and dying a model of sanity. This shows that dreams are not always to be trusted, however reduplicated. Indeed, this is the moral of the case of two Highlanders, father and son, who, in 1753, met a whole army, with women, and children, and camp followers, marching along the Ary, near Inverary. There were officers both on foot and on horseback, whose dress is particularly described. The father, who had been among the Campbells that pulled down the wall at Culloden, thought that the army exceeded the whole force of both parties in that fight. The younger man, for fear of being forcibly enlisted, hid in a wood, but the legions were merely visionary. Nothing ever occurred to explain the incident; no

such army ever did come that way, though the Highlanders naturally looked out for some fulfilment.

\* \* \*

It is a very singular and suspicious circumstance that twice in the last three years, to my knowledge, shooting tenants in Scotland have been compelled to abandon their lodges by the number and violence of the 'hauntings,' coupled with the badness of the sport. Surely there is some connection between these inconveniences. For a shooting tenant, deceived by magnificent promises, does occasionally refuse to pay his rent, and prefers to go to law. There is a case in which the tenant left, on the day after his entry, the mouldy hovel described as a mansion. But a man does not like to bring a suit in which the presence of spooks is combined with the absence of grouse. He would be laughed at, and would lose his case. Hence, probably, the plenty of ghosts where the game is not adequate to the alluring announcements. But it is curious to find such very old-fashioned devices in modern practice, and it is certain that the disappointments of English shooting tenants would supply a very diverting narrative. 'Streams' recommended for sea-trout fishing prove to be bare rocks, or brawling shallow torrents without a pool that could afford comfortable shelter to a par or brandling. The grouse resolve themselves into a stray ptarmigan or two, on inaccessible summits. When 'hauntings' are thrown in, it is no wonder that the miserable tenant decamps across the Tweed, and remains an inveterate enemy to the Caledonian name. I have known a moor (a cheap one) which supplied no game but adders, and the tenant never drew a trigger on his temporary domain. The very salmon are acquiring an ill habit of taking no lure but the gardenia fly, as the worm is facetiously styled, this habit undeniably proving that salmon do take food in fresh water. For a worm, rolling slowly along the bottom, cannot be attacked by the fish out of sheer curiosity and wantonness, as the fly is said to be. The salmon gorges the worm, though no food is ever found in his stomach in fresh water.

\* \* \*

Years ago I published the story of *The Black Officer* as I got it from a boatman in Loch Awe. In my tale a red deer daily entered the captain's sick room, after he was blown up in the siege of an Indian town, sat on a chair by his bedside, and con-

versed with him. In a variant, 'An T' Offigeach Dubh,' published in the *Celtic Magazine* (1878), it is not a deer but a he-goat which converses with the captain, not in his sick chamber, but in the hut where he met with his mysterious end, on January 1, 1800. The Indian adventures are omitted, but we have an addition in three ordinary folklore tricks which the captain plays off on the devil. His military services are fixed in the West, not the East, Indies. The faithful Macpherson, his gillie, is prevented from attending the captain, in his tryst with the devil, by the instinct of his own dogs, which attack him as he is leaving the house. As a matter of fact, the shieling or summer hut, in which the captain and his companions passed the night of the old year, 1799-1800, was riven to pieces by an electric storm, 'the lintel of the door, a heavy block of granite, lay at least a hundred and fifty yards away, four dead and mangled bodies lay in the valley,' the fifth, long missing, was found at a considerable distance. So died the captain, and a Gaelic bard wrote a poem on the event. Hogg dealt with it about 1812; Scott retold it in the *Foreign Review*, and, on April 1, 1828, records that he has got into trouble with the captain's daughter; he received 'a distressing letter.' 'I have given the right version of the tale willingly, but this does not satisfy. . . . The vexation of having to do with ladies, who, on such a point, must be unreasonable, is very great. With a man it would be soon ended or mended. It really hurts my sleep.' It might be worth while for some Celtic antiquary to elucidate the real facts of the Black Captain's career. He was born in 1748, and his military record must be accessible. He was detested, it seems, as an unscrupulous recruiter; the striking manner of his death probably struck the Highland fancy, and, in a space of ten or twelve years, he had a full-blown legend, with a crowd of variants. Then older legends were attracted into his circle, and now there is matter for a little book about the captain. The site of his fatal shieling, it seems, is occupied by 'a beautiful shooting lodge.'

\* \* \*

The following Scotch version of the ode of Horace, *Persicos odi*, seems to be the work of a West country, nay, even of a Renfrew, bard. The true Scots is only spoken on the Border, and in Midlothian among the upper classes, but Renfrew means well, and Paisley has a new statue of Robbie Burns, 'inaugurated' by Lord Rosebery. The word *goullocks* may puzzle the *Athenæum* and

the *Academy* critics. *Goulocks* is not Scots at all, it is Gaelic, derived from the Highland Gaelic-speaking population of Renfrewshire. In Gaelic, *cuileag* means 'fly,' and a *goulock* is, locally, an earwig, an insect naturally odious to Bailie Flackus.

\* \* \*

'*PERSICOS ODI*.'

BY BAILIE FLACKUS.

If the mutton is auld,  
And the kail fresh and sweet,  
Nae flooers are wantit  
To set up the meat.  
I'll be quite content  
To imagine the scent,  
And to tak' the attention  
For what it was meant.

Nae flauntin' o' silk,  
But a calico goon  
And a Paishla cravat  
Ye can buy in the toon.  
But be sure ye no' fail  
For a wash in the pail  
And a decht wi' the toowel  
Wha' hangs on the nail.

Tuts, Jean! I detest  
Every Frenchified dish;  
And to ken their ingredients  
Is faur frae ma wish.  
Wi' a bottle o' sauce  
Thae bodies, o' course,  
Wad mak' a ragoo  
O' the heid o' a horse!

Be na fashious to seek,  
Syne simmer's awa',  
For the late rose wha hangs  
By its stalk on the wa'.  
Ye wad scarcely suppose  
That I'd trouble ma nose  
Wi' a bud in which goulocks  
In thoosands repose.

*AT THE SIGN OF THE SHIP.*

At the back o' the yard  
 Let the table be laid,  
 Where the saugh and the rowan  
 Hae mingled their shade.  
 There I'll tak' my repose  
 At the evening's close,  
 Wi' a bit o' saut herring,  
 And a dish o' tea brose.

\* \* \*

Lord Rosebery is eloquent and inventive, but even he must be finding it difficult to make new speeches about more new statues of Burns. From town to town men hurry him, to consecrate fresh memorials, and to be present when (as a Dumfries programme says) 'The Bodies visit the Mausoleum.' One can conceive the Pilgrim thus expressing himself in lyric numbers.

Was I ever sae tormentit?  
 I'm nearly driven dementit.  
 The things I hae inventit  
 To speak about the Bard  
 Are mony and meritorious,  
 So say the maist censorious;  
 But, oh! it's fair notorious  
 To find new things is hard!

Ma very sleep is broken wi't,  
 The Glorious Shade I've spoken wi't,  
 Poetic thirst I sloken wi't,

But, faith! I'm rinning oot;  
 And here's another bust, ye ken,  
 And talk on it I must, ye ken,  
 For Paisley pits her trust, ye ken,  
 In me, and has nae doot.

Faith, a' the Sultan's meenions  
 I'll curse, and ma opeenions  
 About the puir Armenians

I'll speak and mak' ma maen.  
 Though Robbie never heard o' them,  
 His heart would hae been stirred for them,  
 And speaking out my word for them  
 Kills twa birds wi' ae stane!

\* \* \*

Is it amusing or annoying to find that most of the things which we thought were true are nonsense? The Copernican discoveries must have galled contemporary Ptolemaic men of science. The earth does *not* go round the sun, or the sun does not go round the earth, whichever view is Copernican, must have literally upset contemporary thought. Then came geology—the earth is a good deal older than we had presumed, and there is another speculative upset. I wonder we believe in anything scientific!

\* \* \*

Forty years ago we thought we knew a great deal about the Aryan race and its cradle. Twenty-five years ago we thought we knew all, or a great deal, about Oriental, especially Phœnician, influence on Greek art. Now comes Mr. Arthur Evans's anthropological address to the British Association, and I never felt much more upset. The very globe is reconstructed; the Mediterranean was a chain of lochs. We dig in the caves near Mentone (I have done so with the point of a stick), and we come on a Meolithic stratum and Meolithic Aryans, apparently. We are got into an 'Anatolo-Danubian area,' and a period when gold came chiefly from Ireland, of all unlikely places. As for 'spiraliform ornament,' may I respectfully advise Mr. Evans to consult, if he has not done so, a recent work on 'Moko,' or New Zealand tattooing? That is 'spiraliform' enough; did it come from the Anatolo-Danubian area?

\* \* \*

'The system,' says Mr. Evans, 'which leaves the least call on human efforts at inventiveness seems in anthropology to be the safest.' That is, we should look rather for borrowing than separate invention of ornament. But could Maoris, Peruvians, early Mexicans have *borrowed* decorative motives like those of early Europe and Asia? Did Greeks execute, as Professor Brunn thinks, the sculptures of Nineveh? This is revolutionary indeed. The Mycenæans, whoever they may have been, are taking the part lately played by our old friends the Phœnicians, and Dr. Helbig seems to be an obsolete theorist. Mycenæan ideas were brought by Belgians to this isle of ours 'to remain the root of the late Celtic style in Britain.' The early Christian Irish decoration, as in the Book of Kells, is a child of Mycenæan art. We pass from a twelfth-dynasty Egyptian scarab 'to the Book of Durrow, or the

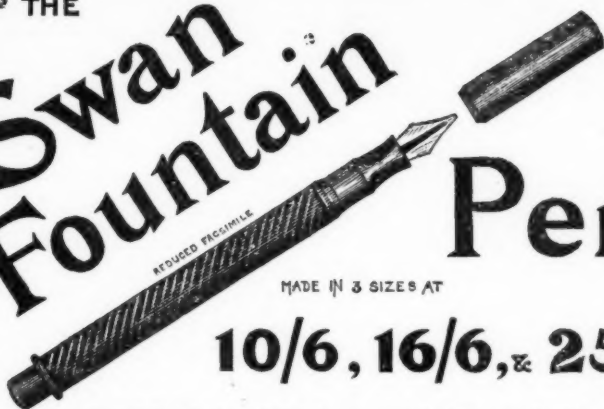
font of Deerhurst.' We have to learn everything over again—not without grumbling and scepticism. Europe does not owe so much to the Orient as we had supposed, and the Orient learned more from Europe than we had deemed. The Phœnicians have only the invention of the alphabet to boast of, and *that* they plagiarised from Crete, rather than adapted from Egypt. Verily we live and learn. To compare Mr. Evans's address with Mr. Max Müller's essay in *Cosmopolis* for September makes one feel that one is treading on very uncertain ground. Sardinia was once full, perhaps, of art like that in the ruins of Mycenæ. An obliterated civilisation, a lost age of history, is being recovered. And still, I presume, we do not know who these clever Mycenæans were. In this scientific revolution we ought to be sorry for popular lecturers, who must get up out of scattered papers, mostly German, a whole set of new ideas and phrases. But probably they will not take the trouble, the lecture-loving public will not find them out, or not for a century, if civilisation lasts so long. Moreover, I conceive that Mr. Cecil Torr and Mr. A. S. Murray are still unconverted, and stand firmly on the ancient trodden ways of Dr. Helbig.

Old things need not be, therefore, true,  
Oh, brother men—nor yet the new,

says the poet, with his usual chilly good sense.

ANDREW LANG.

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### *The 'Donna.'*

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D. Ellis 10s. A parcel of knitted goods from the little girls at Berkeley House, J. D. (Chesterfield), 3s.

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